No. 27 January-March 1959

SOVIET SURVEY

A Quarterly Review of Cultural Trends

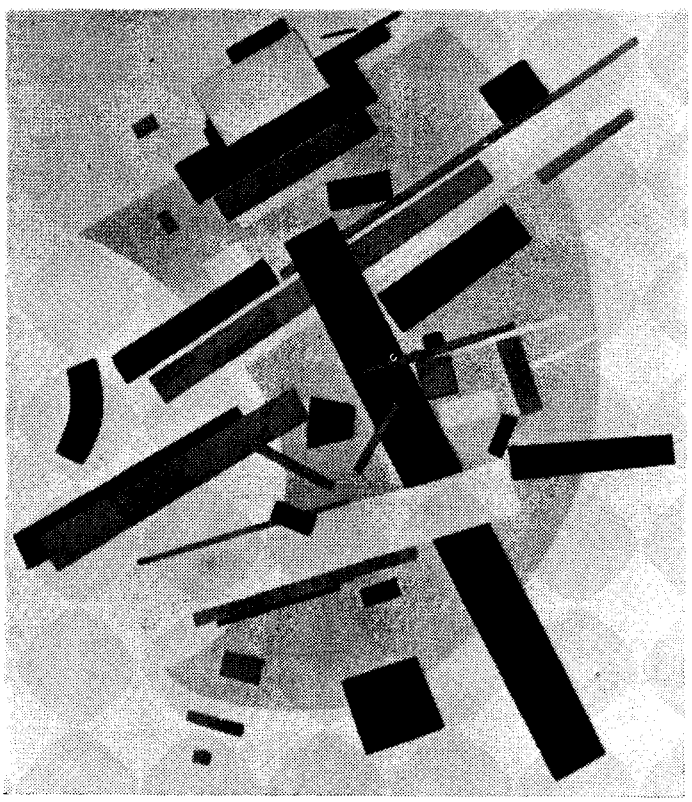
1959: THE LITERARY LANDSCAPE

BERT BRECHT: THE LAST YEARS

THE GENESIS OF SOCIALIST-REALIST PAINTING

SOVIET CONCERT HALL

THE YOUNG FREUD



Suprematist painting, 1916, by Kasimir Malevich

THREE SHILLINGS

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UNDER FIRE

Much Ado About Zhivago

'On 28 December, 1920, in the evening, the poet came into my room. In the dim light I could not see his face clearly . . . . After a long and tormented introduction he began to read about the Daemon's broken wings. Only then did I realise who had come to see me. Yes, on 28 December, 1920, at five o'clock in the evening, while I was reading the last issue of *Izvestiya*, I had been talking to M. Y. Lermontov himself . . . . This is an account of an ordinary meeting with Boris Leonidovich Pasternak, the most beloved among my brothers, the poets.'

(Ilya Ehrenburg, *Portrety Russkikh Poetov*, 1922, p. 127.)

'Sorrento, 30 November, 1927.

. . . . To wish you "well," Boris Leonidovich? I am afraid you may be offended if I wish your poetry would only be clearer, knowing full well how much good there is in it. It frequently seems to me that the borderline between impression and pattern in your poetry is too thin, almost imperceptible . . . . To imagine means to bring form, a pattern into chaos. Sometimes I am painfully aware that the world's chaos overwhelms the force of your creativity and is reflected only as chaos in a disharmonic manner. Or maybe I am mistaken? If so, please excuse me. I sincerely wish you all the best.

A. Peshkov.'

(Maxim Gorky, *Sobranie Sochinenii*, Vol. 30, p. 48.)

'Whence all these quarrels around Pasternak? Why do some think him the greatest contemporary master, while others, and they are many more, find him obscure, pretentious, unintelligible, and meaningless? . . . . There is no doubt that Pasternak is the most cultured among our poets. His attachment to music and philosophy, to German and French poetry, clearly emerges from his poems. He obviously feels this tie and he is engaged in a dialogue through centuries with Shakespeare, Goethe, and Lermontov. This attachment to the cultural heritage separates him from the Futurists, with whom he is usually classified. The Futurists have tried to jettison the cultural past, more as an emotional reaction than as a result of knowledge, for they know it badly . . . .

What is the relation between social ideas and Pasternak's poetry? The focal point is the limitation of its themes, the absence of social ties, its *kamernost*. The absence of social ties is a response to the breakdown or weakening of the social environment which has produced it. The intimate lyric comes into being where the class struggle is least palpably felt. Certain material conditions are necessary if 'interior' poetry is to flourish—security, comfort, cultural conditions. It cannot be produced by those who have to struggle for their very existence, who give most of their time to manual labour, who live in dirty, dark houses. But security alone is not sufficient. The very active part of the commercial bourgeoisie, of those who speculate on the exchange and are the factory owners, provides no suitable soil. The real basis for intimate lyrical poetry is found in that part of the intelligentsia which has already been able to achieve a sufficiently respectable and recognised position in society. It possesses the necessary measure of material security and is much superior to the bourgeoisie culturally; indeed, it looks down with contempt on the bourgeoisie. It is atomised, the social ties within this group are weak, and they are also weak vis-a-vis other groups. It does not feel itself to be a single whole, or part of the whole. It stands aside from the main stream of active life. The *Boheme* is also atomised and also off the main track. But it wants to obtain what the other group has already achieved. Therefore it is seemingly much more revolutionary: it negates, rebels, and hates. Its revolt against society is not too serious: it does not menace the bourgeoisie with destruction, it does not constitute a danger to it. But despite everything . . . . this is a rebellion. In Pasternak there is no such revolt. If Mayakovskii is the poet of the *Boheme*, Pasternak is a representative of the highly cultured intellectual élite, the hereditary intelligentsia, on which the ruling class has left an indelible imprint.'

(A. Lezhnev, *Sovremenniki*, 1927, pp. 32-54.)

'Pasternak has already been writing for a long time, but he has come to the forefront only in the last two years. He was needed. Pasternak brings something new into literature . . . . I do not know where he will go (and this is only to the good; it is bad when a critic knows where the poet is going). Pasternak is groping and his work impinges upon others. No other poet is so frequently echoed by other poets as Pasternak. He is not only himself in ferment; he also provides the yeast.'

(Yuri Tynyanov, *Arkhaisty i Novatory*, 1929, p. 562.)

(*Continued on page 88*)

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The Writers and the Party Congress

1959: THE LITERARY LANDSCAPE

Pasternak

When Radishchev's *Journey from Petersburg to Moscow* was brought to the attention of the Empress, she was enraged. The censor who passed the manuscript had failed to grasp its subversive content. Catherine covered the margin of the book with angry comments and the police were ordered to destroy all copies. Radishchev was sentenced to death, but having apologised, his plea for mercy was granted. He was exiled for ten years to Siberia. Shortly after his return he committed suicide. Later he was to be called 'the father of the Russian intelligentsia.'

Pasternak's novel did not get through the censorship. The comments on it were written not on the margin of the book in ungrammatical Russian, but in a private letter by the editors of *Novy Mir*, the style of which was comparatively civilised. It was 1956, and the second literary thaw was in full swing after the Twentieth Congress.

For almost a year literary publications reflected the ferment among the Soviet intelligentsia, but its full extent was implicitly admitted only in 1958, in Kochetov's novel and in Sobolev's speech to the RSFSR Writers Congress. In both 1956 is referred to as 'the black year.' This is understandable: the literary officials then began to feel that the elaborate system of Party control over literature might crumble under the impact of 'rotten revisionist ideas.' The decision not to permit the publication of Pasternak's novel is even more understandable. At stake was nothing less than the soul of the Soviet intelligentsia.

For forty years the Soviet régime had tried hard to break the continuity between the Soviet intelligentsia and its pre-revolutionary predecessors. But cultural affinities persisted, and came to the surface in the brief spell of permissive freedom. The writers' demand for 'sincerity' was inseparable from a critical concern with social issues—the traditional twin themes of Russian literature. The two volumes of *Literaturnaia Moskva* stand as a vivid illustration of the modest, but in Soviet conditions bold, attempt to take up the broken legacy.

In such a situation Pasternak might have become a living symbol of cultural continuity, bridging the gap between the pre-revolutionary Russian and the post-revolutionary Soviet intelligentsia, and from this angle the artistic qualities of *Dr Zhivago* are irrelevant. In the Soviet context the philosophical and religious background of *Dr Zhivago* is extravagant, and Pasternak's specific views could hardly appeal to the present Soviet intelligentsia. But that was not the point. Nor was it his attitude towards the 1917 revolution. The opinions and beliefs of the Russian pre-revolutionary intelligentsia were not uniform at any given moment or over a period of time. Nevertheless, there was enough continuity, despite all the differences in views, to treat the Russian intelligentsia as a social phenomenon, in fact to use the concept itself. As to the continuity of specific beliefs, it is of course obvious that many representative articles of faith of the 19th century leaders of the intelligentsia eventually found their way into Bolshevism: Herzen's belief that Russia can jump over the stage of capitalism, Pisarev's utilitarian ethics, Tkachev's ideas on the special rôle of the revolutionary élite, Nechaev's acceptance of the use of force and fraud as 'normal,' Lavrov's stress on the rôle of the Party, and the general fascination with the idea of the dictatorship of the revolutionary minority. In this sense, there is nothing easier than to show the continuity of the present day *apparatchiki* with their revolutionary predecessors. But this is only part of the story. Socially and culturally the intelligentsia had been changing; the tough-minded ruthlessness of the *raznochintsy* was becoming less representative before the first World War and the social obsessions of the 'penitent nobles' were gradually giving way to other interests, among which artistic and æsthetic

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preoccupations were becoming more prominent. In this respect Pasternak truly reflects his formative period, just as the Soviet *vydvizhentsy* echo the crudeness of the pre-revolutionary *raznochintsy*.

The Soviet intelligentsia has also been undergoing change. Although any close parallel between the evolution of the pre- and post-revolutionary intelligentsia would be misleading, there is nevertheless a shift in the focus of interest and a change in attitudes as a result of social change.

Socially, it is of course not a free-floating intelligentsia. It is state employed, and the pre-revolutionary definition of intelligentsia does not fit it any more. Culturally, the break in continuity consists in the attitude towards political authority. The one common characteristic of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia, from Radishchev onwards, was its rejection of the political authority above it. It never consisted of a mass of individuals embodying the Lavrovian ideal of 'the critically thinking person.' Its philosophy was usually inconsistent and not original, being the adaptation to Russian conditions of Western political ideas, taken from St Simon and Fourier, Bentham and Owen, Blanqui and Marx. But, even if not original or critical in the Kantian sense, it was individually and socially critical of political authority, and this is what marks the watershed between it and the 'new Soviet intelligentsia.'

And this is where *Dr Zhivago* comes in. Pasternak crossed the boundary. He displayed a critical attitude towards authority, and used a meta-political approach. But where the Party attributes political significance to every action, the revolt against the political is considered in itself a political act.

It is not surprising that the literary officials reacted in a traditional manner, thus upholding on their part the legacy of the pre-communist past.

The issue was kept under cover as long as possible, but when the Nobel Prize forced it into the open, steps were immediately taken to isolate Pasternak. Not only was he deprived of the title of Soviet writer; Sobolev denied to Pasternak the title of a Russian *intelligent:*

> 'No, no matter how many tears Pasternak may shed about the Russian intelligentsia, which is said to have perished in the Revolution, no matter how fervently he swears his love for it, and no matter as what uninvited Christian Messiah he would like to imagine himself, Pasternak has no ground to call himself a Russian *intelligent*.'

If the son of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia had to be a symbol, it was to be a symbol of the end of a cultural formation rather than a portent of its rebirth. The case was to be a warning to other writers about the limitations imposed on the Soviet 'creative intelligentsia,' and the futility of any attempts to transgress them.

In 1836 a writer was declared insane for publishing an essay which clashed with the official view pronounced by the Tsarist Minister of Education that 'Russia's past is admirable, its present more than magnificent; as for its future, it is beyond anything that the boldest imagination can picture.' In 1958 Pasternak was not declared insane, but the authorities, no doubt conscious of the tradition of Radishchev and Chaadaev, kept him under medical surveillance. Again, as in 1836, the Minister of Culture, Mikhailov, declared that the present is magnificent and the future beyond imagination.

And to complete the picture of historical continuity, Pasternak has been forced to recant. If it was not a contradiction in terms, one might say that he did it with great dignity. But recant he did, like so many before him; like Radishchev and Pestel, like Pushkin and Dostoevsky, and in modern times, like Bukharin and Rykov, or more recently the writers engaged in the 'heroic feat of silence,' Dudintsev, Aliger, and others.

But recantations did not in the past prevent the reappearance of critical attitudes which were born as a reaction to the autocracy itself and produced the Russian radical tradition. Not all the copies of Radishchev's book and Chaadaev's letter were destroyed.

Literary Policy and the Writers Congress

'Whoever was not alive in Russia in 1856,' wrote Tolstoy, 'does not know what life is.'

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Then, as a hundred years later, the death of the autocrat had roused expectations and brought forth a ferment of ideas among the *literati*. The Party officials, for whom it was a 'black year,' decided to treat 1956 as Herzen did 1848, as 'a pedagogical year.' But they were concerned not only with learning the lessons of that year, but with imposing these lessons on the writers. 1958 was the year of the literary counter-attack.

The concern of the authorities about the restive mood of the intellectuals in 1956 can be gauged from the account of Khrushchev's personal activity among the writers given in an interview by the head of the Party's Cultural department, Polikarpov, to the East German magazine, *Neuer Weg* (No. 21, 1958):

> 'In May 1957 a conference of writers was held at the Central Committee, in connection with a Plenum of the Writers' Union which was to take place a few days later. At this meeting the First Secretary of the CC of the CPSU, Comrade Khrushchev, spoke. In his speech he formulated the most important tasks which the Party raises in the present phase of literary development.'

It was at this garden party that Khrushchev spoke bluntly to the writers, attacking Aliger personally and threatening them with capital punishment in case of trouble à la Hungary. ('Our hand will not tremble'!) At the Plenum which followed, the ranks of the dissident writers were split and at a subsequent meeting, arranged shortly afterwards, 'Comrade Khrushchev spoke again. A short summary of his remarks was published under the title "For a closer link between art, literature, and life." '

This became the new Party platform for literature. All subsequent literary pronouncements were to refer to this basic document, just as after 1946 they had to refer to the (Zhdanov) resolution on *Znamya* and *Zvezda*. Eight months later, in February 1958, 'members of the Central Committee met artists and writers in the Kremlin. Those who had the honour of attending this conference could see for themselves what friendly feelings these circles of the intelligentsia cherish for the Party functionaries . . . . and what great trust each side has in the other. Comrade Khrushchev spoke at this conference too, and his speech was published as a pamphlet . . . . Comrade Khrushchev repeatedly conducts personal conversations with writers and artists.'

The line on literature laid down by Khrushchev was to be the underlying theme of the forthcoming third Writers Congress. This was scheduled for the end of the year, and throughout 1958 *Literaturnaia Gazeta* and the 'fat magazines' devoted their columns to the pre-congress discussion. It was more monotonous in its repetition of the socialist-realist formulas than anything of this kind produced before, lacking even the tension inherent in the Zhdanovist attacks on the writers.

For a year or so *Literaturnaia Gazeta* kept up its admonitions:

> 'In this blissfully tense period of 1957-1958, full of struggle, passion, commotion, of the struggle between the old and the new, of sleepless nights, of reflections and discussions, when the whole nation finds itself in movement, why are so many writers reacting so slowly to the most important events in life?
>
> In Comrade N. S. Khrushchev's pronouncements on questions of art and literature a deep analysis is given of the reasons for this lag; the most important is the loss of contact with life by some writers.
>
> Now, as never before . . . . extraordinary possibilities are opening for literary endeavour, for the creation of artistic portraits of our contemporaries, for helping the Party in the solution of the day's problems' (25 March 1958).

But the efforts of *Literaturnaia Gazeta* were not good enough for *Pravda*. In its editorial of 17 August 1958 it castigated both the writers and their paper:

> 'The pre-Congress discussion, which has developed nowadays in literary journals and magazines, is still not yet really concentrated on what is most basic and important, on such problems as "literature and life," "literature and the building of communism." However surprising it may be, there are still writers who are ready to raise the question whether contemporary subjects should really determine the main line of development of Soviet Literature.

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> And *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, instead of giving a militant tone to the pre-congress discussion, found it possible to print articles in which the vital significance of contemporary themes was in fact denied and the theory of distance, long ago disproved by life, was raised instead.'

Literaturnaia Gazeta duly complained that there are some writers who 'are afraid in case, somehow or other, they make a mistake in their assessment of the impermanent facts of life.' Such writers 'cling to all kinds of incorrect "theories" and write only about the past.'

Finally, at the RSFSR Writers' Congress, Sobolev denounced the heresy of 'distance' in no uncertain terms. The game of trying to escape into the historical past, which for some writers is a means of avoiding current Party instructions while remaining ideologically unassailable, has to be ended. Henceforth, whatever such writers may feel about it, they have to produce contemporary novels.

What is meant by 'contemporaneity' was made clear in the Central Committee's message to the congress, read by Pospelov. Writers were asked to display *partiinost*, which would enable them to do their part in helping the Party to fulfil the seven-year plan and to implement the policies to be laid down at the forthcoming 21st Party congress. 'The writers of the Russian Federation are called upon to play an active part in that great constructive endeavour.'

The congress also duly condemned the literary 'revisionists': 'No foreign revisionist tricks can bring disrepute upon the well-tested principles of socialist realism.' Surkov, the secretary of the Soviet Writers Union, denounced specifically the Yugoslav writers, the 'revisionist nests' in the contemporary literature of 'fraternal Poland,' and 'those Hungarian "theoreticians" who in 1956 took the side of the imperialists.' He also complained about the waverings of foreign communists on Pasternak's case, obviously referring to the critical pronouncements of Pablo Neruda, Jorge Amado, Halldor Laxness, and others.

> 'Unfortunately, the fuss raised by the bourgeois press in connection with the award of the Nobel Prize to Pasternak, and the fact that, indignant with behaviour unworthy of a member of the Union, we have deprived him of the title of Soviet writer, have disorientated some progressive writers, and sown in their hearts doubts about the correctness of our decision' (*Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 14 December 1958).

Not only abroad were doubts expressed about Party literary practices. Sobolev for one, mentioned their existence in the Soviet Union itself. He referred to an argument used by some writers in their disputes with the authorities and reported one of them as saying:

> 'But I *am* relying on the wisdom of the masses. I *am* expressing the thoughts of the people, which do not always coincide with the prescriptions which you suggest we should insert in our poems.'

The existence of a 'public opinion' which created a 'literary climate' contrary to the Party line was described in an article by Lev Nikulin. According to him some 'snobs' and 'pseudo-intellectuals,' who before the War used to talk about James Joyce, and now talk about Kafka, without having read either, stir up 'backward writers,' and when these find themselves in trouble, talk about 'martyrs' and 'being hauled over the coals.' According to Nikulin, they remained in the background but were able 'to draw into their intrigues people with big names.'

Who are those 'people with big names'? None of the outstanding writers, except Fedin, spoke at the congress. Only few among the older writers 'with names' wrote an individual condemnation of Pasternak. As at the time of the *affaire* of *Literaturnaia Moskva*, Sholokhov, Ehrenburg, and Leonov remained silent, avoiding direct participation in the conflict. And Fedin defended those writers who refuse to be bullied.

Whoever they were, these subversive stars were charged, like Socrates, with corrupting the young:

> 'We cannot say that the damage done to our youth by the revisionist heart-searching has been eradicated. The immense, overwhelming majority of our youth express the spirit of our times. But the authors of these collections bear full responsibility for the fate of some of our young poets and writers, especially those who are only

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beginning to write. When intellectual frivolity, unsuitable to age, and flirtations with "objectivity" are put into print, that is a qualitative change. In this case the authority of some writers' names set a bad example to the literary youth, and here and there nihilist flowers began to shoot up, insulting the heroic deeds of our people, and casting doubt on our ideological values.'

Before Sobolev denounced these practices at the congress, the literary press complained that some young authors were still writing from 'muddled, obscure positions,' preferring 'the shady sides of our reality.' One speaker at the congress referred disapprovingly to the 'specific characteristics of the literary youth: a disdainful attitude towards national traditions, narrow themes in the work of many young poets; they write about unfaithful wives, bad mothers-in-law, and drunken husbands . . . .'

The congress resolved that 'work with the young writers is a primary task of all literary organisations.' Admission to the Writers Unions is to be made more difficult, and 'excessive liberalism' is to be avoided both in 'the question of admission and in respect to the subsequent work of newly-accepted writers.'

The literary exponents of the Party line obviously face a dilemma here. As a counterweight to the heretical tendencies of some older writers and the revisionism of many young ones, they have fallen back upon the old device of promoting the young and unknown, often provincial writers, who will thus owe their careers to the Party. Hence the sudden interest of the old literary law-givers in the youngest generation of newcomers to belles-lettres. Already at the February Plenum of the Writers Union Surkov suddenly became concerned with the fact, which he then disclosed, that 'the Union of Writers is getting old; for example, in its Moscow section barely 10 per cent of the writers are below the age of 40.' Describing the preparations for the forthcoming All-Union Congress of Writers in *Soviet Literature* (No. 10, 1958), Sobolev stated that 'one of the most important, if not *the* most important object of these activities is to draw young writers, especially those living in remote parts, into the organisational orbit of the Union.'

But the idea of swamping the Writers Union with new members to dilute resistance and facilitate political control, presents a more difficult problem than the Leninist enrolment (*Leninskii nabor*) used by Stalin to consolidate his position within the Party after Lenin's death. Khrushchev's *apparatchiki* in the Union are dealing with a more articulate category, that of the men-of-letters rather than the undifferentiated mass of the workers. And despite indoctrination and intellectual isolation, the turbulent spirit of the last generation of young newcomers, the Granins, Naguibins, Dudintsevs, Yashins, Evtushenkos, and Rozhdestvenskis, is still alive, even if in a more subdued form, among their successors, such as Eglon (whose *White Lily* has been condemned), and Moskovskin (whose story, *How's Life, Semyon?* has also been under attack). The magazine *Znamya* complained recently that it is characteristic of a certain circle of young authors to denounce the bad things in life, and this, in Party eyes, is a youthful sin rather than the privilege of youth.

It is not certain, therefore, that the policy of 'youth promotion' may not misfire. The young protégés may not show gratitude or display that outstanding trait of Soviet man described in a memorable phrase by Sobolev at the congress:

'Soviet man is distinguished by a special, I would say, by a state approach to all the phenomena of life.'

It is not surprising therefore that the All-Union Writers congress was postponed again and again. The continued discontent of the writers, the evidence of ferment among the youth, and, finally, the Pasternak affair, put it at least temporarily out of gear.

The Anti-Dudintsev

Perhaps the most interesting event on the Soviet literary scene in 1958 was the appearance of *The Brothers Yershov* by Vladimir Kochetov, a clear fulfilment of the Party order (*sotsialny zakaz*). Kochetov's novel, published in two instalments in *Neva* (June and July 1958), was at once given an enthusiastic reception in the Soviet press. *Pravda* and *Kommunist* welcomed it as a sharp weapon against revisionism, consciously tendentious, militant, and polemical; *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, in a review by Y. Zhdanov,

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hailed it as 'the reply of a Bolshevik artist to some writers . . . . who wavered in the complex conditions of the struggle against bourgeois ideology, who became victims and propagators of gloomy "thaw" moods and revisionist hesitations, and who began to sink into the mud of bourgeois pseudo-democracy and to make concessions to philistine bourgeois tastes.'

Kochetov's first novel, *The Zhurbins*, a long and not very inspiring story about a family of ship-builders, had attracted some attention and its author became for a time the editor of *Literaturnaia Gazeta*. He created a minor sensation in 1958 when he attacked the Presidium of the Lenin Prize Committee for its 'incorrect attitude' in withholding prizes from some deserving candidates and hinted that its decisions might have been dictated by politically suspect motives. His article in *Literaturnaia Gazeta* (24 April 1958) was followed by a discussion in which the Committee defended its position (*Sovetskaia Kultura*, 15 May 1958). But Kochetov soon received his reward. In October 1958, following the publication of his Party best-seller, he again became the editor of *Literaturnaia Gazeta*.

The Yershovs, a working class family in a big provincial industrial city, are the prototype of what a proletarian family should be: faithful to their fatherland, their class and party, excellent and responsible workers. But no family is without its black sheep, the Yershovs too have their Stepan, a former member of the Vlassov army who returns to his native city after his release from the labour camp. Another Yershov, Iakov, is a leading official in the local theatre (this provides the opportunity to comment on literary and artistic affairs and the state of mind of the intelligentsia in general). A third Yershov, Andrei, is in love with Kapa, the daughter of the local Party secretary (this opens the door to observations on the rôle of the Party).

With all his opposition to the 'revisionists' and 'liberals,' Kochetov provides some interesting insights into the workings of Soviet society, which would hardly have been possible in a Soviet novel ten or five years ago: for a long time Kapa does not tell her beloved that her father is indeed the first secretary of the Party committee; she is afraid that it might overwhelm him; she does not bring him home because it would be 'awkward' for him to pass the militia guard stationed in front of their residence. Her mother is exasperated, at least for a time, at the prospect of her daughter's marriage to a commoner, Andrei being just a simple factory worker. And Kapa's father, himself of proletarian origin, is appalled on his first visit to the Yershov home: How squalid, shabby, and dirty it is, and what a let-down it would be for his daughter who had been accustomed to a very different standard. And the Yershovs are not just ordinary workers, but skilled masters and *peredoviki*.

These are however only minor aspects of this militant novel; like one of his heroes, Kochetov undoubtedly likes scandals, but cannot tolerate the general trend of 'rotten liberalism' in Soviet society in 1956/57. He is angry at the glorification of the ex-convicts, of the people who return from the camps following the amnesty. He considers their punishment insufficient: one former camp inmate is severely beaten up by a representative of the angry populace after his return. The state has forgiven him, but not the people.

Kochetov is even more angry with the intellectuals, who read 'silly books' and listen to foreign broadcasts, all those 'parasites,' six-footed creatures who had never opened their mouths but suddenly waxed eloquent after the Twentieth Congress. In a dialogue between Andrei and Kapa he even expresses doubts about the political reliability of the intelligentsia in general. There are, of course, 'healthy elements' in the Soviet intelligentsia, but they need the help of the working class to keep their ideas straight. Iakov finds it extremely difficult to deal with the intellectuals in their ugly liberal mood, but he is reassured by a friend in Moscow who compares the drive against the 'pseudo-democratic' intelligentsia with the campaign against the Trotskyites in 1926/7: In a year or two, he is told, they will retreat and 'crawl back' and admit their mistakes. Kochetov describes the liberal-democratic movement as being led by a small clique of intellectuals who will meet their deserved fate. The others joined in not because they believed in the liberal ideas, but because this small clique had a virtual monopoly in the publishing houses, theatres, and so on.

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Among the older intellectuals some are said to be interested only in the classics or in foreign writers, and are impatiently waiting for the day when the Party authorities will cease to interfere with literary and artistic affairs. There are also wreckers among the young, many of whom exaggerated the damage done by the 'cult of the individual.' Such things happened, of course, mainly in academic institutions; in the factory, says Andrei, such outrages would have been quite impossible. As to 'Russia First,' Kochetov again claims priority for Popov: he invented the telephone and only former Nazi collaborators argue that 'people outside Russia dispute that statement.'

The Brothers Yershov ends on a happy note. The villains are unmasked, the positive heroes emerge triumphant. The intellectuals again conform to the Party line, drop their slogan 'Back to the golden twenties,' and agree to serve the people. As a Soviet critic put it, they realised that they cannot remain neutral in the relentless struggle now going on. They have to declare themselves on one side of the barricades, *tertium non datur*. With this message '*The Brothers Yershov* helps us in the struggle for the realisation of the bright ideals of mankind and its future' (*Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 6 September 1958).

It would be frivolous to dismiss Kochetov's novel as a Party resolution dressed up as literature. It expresses genuine sentiments and at times achieves the contentious ideal of 'sincerity in literature.' It certainly represents an influential strand of Soviet opinion, and the praise it was given reflects more than the usual propaganda technique, and probably corresponds to some deep resentments in Party circles about the attitudes and behaviour of the 'creative intelligentsia.' 'If there is a nihilist attitude à la Makhaev towards the intelligentsia, if the very word intellectual is used ironically, the intelligentsia has itself to blame.'

Soviet literary history

In the Stalin era no attempt was made, or could be made, to write the history of Soviet literature —with the sole exception of a couple of meagre textbooks for secondary schools. The first systematic attempt to write Soviet literary history, *The Outline History of Soviet Russian Literature*, was reviewed in a recent issue of *Soviet Survey* (January-March 1958). Since then another and more ambitious project has been launched, the *Istoriya Russkoi Sovetskoi Literatury*, to be used as a university textbook. The first volume, the only one so far published, comes up to the eve of the second world war. It is a more far-reaching attempt to revise the traditional judgments of the Zhdanov-Stalin era; the editors and contributors include Soviet critics such as Prof. Metchenko and Mme Shtut, who in a series of interesting articles in Soviet literary periodicals in 1956/7 demanded a revaluation of the writers of the twenties and the thirties and their works. Some of the official critics of the Zhdanov period have, however, also contributed to the new *Istoriya* (*e.g.* Prof. L. Timofeev, the author of the school textbook in the post-war period), and the work should therefore be regarded as a compromise, or perhaps an attempt to find middle ground between traditionalism and the officially sanctioned revisions. As the *Istoriya* is a revised and extended version of the preceding *Outline*, it is not difficult to pin down word by word the revisions made since 1954/5, when the *Outline* was first published. The table of contents gives an idea of the scope and internal balance of the work:

Introduction (48 pages)
A. M. Gorky (87 pages)
The Literature of the period of the Great Socialist October Revolution and the Civil War (1917-1920) 37 pages
The Literature of the Twenties (72 pages)
V. V. Maiakovski (154 pages)
Demian Bedny (32 pages)
A. S. Serafimovich (34 pages)
D. A. Furmanov (31 pages)
The Literature of the Thirties (106 pages)
A. N. Tolstoi (62 pages)
M. A. Sholokhov (67 pages)
N. A. Ostrovski (24 pages)

It would be unfair to take the number of pages dedicated to the different writers as an exact yardstick for the degree of esteem in which they are held. It is not entirely fortuitous, on the other hand, that a number of writers have been singled out for special attention whose intrinsic literary importance is insignificant whatever their political or propagandistic merits (*e.g.* Demian Bedny, Ostrovski, Furmanov). This,

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as well as the somewhat exaggerated consideration given to Maiakovski at the expense of other first-rank writers, is one indication of the limits of official revisionism.

The modifications made in 1958 are largely changes of emphasis, and a toning down of the political denunciations in the 1954/5 *Outline*. In dealing with the literary groups of the twenties, the *Outline* attacked the Serapion Brothers as 'uniting under the reactionary-bourgeois idea of the artist's non-partyness' and calls them (quoting the late Zhdanov) the protagonists of 'rotten apoliticism, phariseeism and perfidy.' The new *Istoriya* omits the Zhdanov quotation and the reference to the 'banner of reactionary-bourgeois ideas.' It contents itself with criticising the 'idealist æsthetics' and the concept of being above classes represented by that group. It also expresses the view that the creative works of members of the group had really not much in common with (*i.e.* was much better than) their apolitical declarations.

The 'Pereval' group is condemned in the *Outline* as a Trotskyite, counter-revolutionary fraction composed of 'enemies of the people' (p.101). The new *Istoriya* omits these ornamental epithets, while denouncing 'Pereval' for its theories, and for such demands as 'so-called freedom for the writer,' for its denial of the rôle of consciousness in art and its appeal for intuitive creation beyond the control of the mind. Both the *Outline* and the *Istoriya* charge the 'Lef' with naturalist deviation, vulgarisation, and the denial of the educational rôle of literature, but the 1958 edition is more restrained and also mentions certain positive achievements of the 'Lef.' The Constructivists of the twenties (Ilya Selvinski, Vera Inber, E. Bagritski, K. Selinski) are denounced by the *Outline* for cosmopolitan views, for their fight against Marxist theories and their bowing down (*nizkopoklonstvo*) before the capitalist West, in particular the United States. The *Istoriya* omits these political charges, and calls the Constructivists merely 'formalistic defenders of technical progress in contemporary bourgeois society.' While the *Istoriya* denounces sectarianism in the RAPP, following the lead given by the *Outline*, reference to the activities of 'Trotskyites' in that group, prominent in the *Outline* (p. 103), has been omitted.

The *Outline* made no mention of Isaac Babel, whereas the new *Istoriya* mixes praise with criticism in a single page survey of his works (p. 202/3). It blames him for ultra-naturalist trends, a somewhat artificially æsthetic conception of reality (*estetizirovannoe vospriatie deistvitelnosti*), a predilection for the exotic in manners and psychology. It praises him for his style, his high heroic pathos, and his humanity. Boris Pasternak received occasional mention in the *Outline*, but nowhere more than one single sentence, and always in a hostile spirit. The *Istoriya* deals with him at greater length, quotes a passage from one of his poems, and an excerpt from a letter from Gorky to Pasternak. It praises his two historical-revolutionary poems of the thirties ('1905' and 'Lieutenant Shmidt') for their 'tragic optimism and the high tension of revolutionary emotions.' According to the *Istoriya*, Pasternak had overcome in these two poems the disharmonic 'chaos of the world' that Gorky had noted in his works. However, in his subsequent writings the poet remained as before on positions that were remote from active participation (*vtorzhenie*) in life (p. 228).

It remains to be added that the preface to the *Istoriya* includes references not merely to the Twentieth Party congress but also to the sputnik. The cult of the individual is said to have had serious consequences for Soviet literature, and the idealisation of positive heroes as well as the '*lakirovka*' of conditions is criticised. But no serious harm has been done: the struggle against the false portrayal of reality has never ceased; even works that were affected by the Stalin cult (such as Pavlenko's *Happiness*) have their good sides. The author of the introduction, Metchenko, notes that history has long ago put Soviet literature in the 'forefront of the ideological struggle,' and he denounces the opportunists ('including some inside the socialist camp') who have attacked Socialist Realism. 'Socialist Realism is the highest stage in the development of art' (p. 17). And Metchenko is one of the more broadminded Soviet literary critics, who proposed the rehabilitation of some of the Soviet writers who had perished in the purges.

On translations

In the debates preceding the third Writers Congress the Soviet attitude towards contem-

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porary Western literature has more than once come in for comment. T. Motyleva, one of the leading Soviet experts in this field has noted (*Lit. Gazeta*, 14 August 1958) that much progress has been achieved during the last few years; the monthly *International Literature* has translated the works of progressive writers from outside the communist bloc, critical essays on Western writers such as Stefan Zweig, Roger Martin du Gard, Lion Feuchtwanger and others have been published. But some of the basic problems in the field are as yet unsolved, according to Motyleva. 'Five or six years ago we had many articles about the decomposition of the bourgeois literature of the West—very militant in tone, but suffering from "deklarativnost," written without the necessary acumen and knowledge. More recently such articles against reactionary literature have become very infrequent. But we need such essays, for the literature of our class enemies consists not only of comics, digests, and similar works. There are more noteworthy phenomena among them. It is customary among us to give en passant a negative appraisal of such protagonists of modernism as André Gide, Kafka and Joyce. But is it really possible to fight ideological adversaries by hushing up the whole matter or by using formulations that are as "energetic" as they are laconic?' Motyleva demands a 'merciless' struggle against the ideological enemy in the field of literature—but a struggle waged on a higher ideological level, on the basis of a more thorough knowledge. She mentions Lenin in this context, referring to the fact that he read hundreds of books and articles, wrote hundreds of pages about bourgeois philosophy 'although he was convinced from the very beginning that "Machism" was a reactionary philosophy.' 'The time is ripe to talk seriously about Kafka, Camus, and several other pseudo-innovators who enjoy an inflated reputation in the West, and who have sometimes found followers also in the countries of the People's Democracy.' Motyleva is very much concerned about the impact of 'revisionism' in both Poland and Yugoslavia; up to now Soviet critics have merely denied the allegations made by Polish and Yugoslav writers with regard to the sterility of Soviet literature during the last two or three decades. But there is another aspect that has so far been neglected, namely the dire consequences of 'revisionism' as far as the foreign writers themselves are concerned. Motyleva notes that though there are qualified cadres to launch these attacks, the Soviet experts on Polish literature (for instance) have shown a curious lack of enthusiasm to engage in these polemics and have preferred to deal with Slowacki and Sienkiewicz.

How well informed is the Soviet reader about world literature? L. Ivasheva, another leading Soviet expert, recalls a conversation she had several years ago with a British parliamentary delegation, in which she was told by one of the visitors from London that 'you know our literature much better than we do.' This of course is very reassuring, but Ivasheva nevertheless has some misgivings when analysing the prospectuses of the Soviet publishing houses for the next year or two. She finds, for instance, nothing on or from Spain, almost nothing from Canada. She discusses at some length the choice of translations from English literature to amplify her criticism. The ideological struggle in capitalist countries is very complicated, we are told. Apart from American exports into England (permeated with 'pornography and the glorification of crime') many decadent books are published, and given wide acclaim by the reactionary (British) press and radio. This literature includes the poetry of T. S. Eliot and Aldous Huxley ('permeated with hate towards everything progressive'), the 'anti-Soviet lampoons' of Orwell, and the books of Evelyn Waugh, 'who is still alive.' On the other hand there is the progressive literature—Aldridge and Lindsay, Sommerfield and Gwyn Thomas, Doris Lessing and Len Dogherty, and of course Sean O'Casey, the 'old friend of the Soviet Union.' But there are also dozens of British writers, 'many of them gifted, who take a position in the middle.' Ivasheva mentions Graham Greene ('who revealed interest in public problems long before *The Quiet American*—see *England made me* and *The Heart of the Matter*'), C. P. Snow ('who has described various social circles in his *Strangers and Brothers*') and the late Joyce Cary, 'an honest and talented writer who remained however at the crossroads till the very end.' Among them are a number of authors who have recorded their protest against colonialism and expressed sympathy towards the

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peoples of the dependent countries, such as Basil Davidson and Desmond Stewart (Mr Davidson is on the staff of the *New Statesman*, Mr Stewart a contributor to Sir Oswald Mosley's *European*). There is the pleiad of young writers, the 'angry young men' of the post-war generation who have been 'betrayed by the promises of the social revolution' that were lavishly given out by Labour—among them Kingsley Amis, John Wain, and Osborne. Most of these writers are 'realists in the narrow sense,' according to Mme Ivasheva. Life as described by them is realistic only in so far as they succeed in getting rid of the wrong conceptions that cloud their artistic view. Which goes not only for such popular writers as Powell and Hartley, Angus Wilson and Newby, but also Joyce Cary. Those who have come closest to realism—the 'progressive writers' apart—are Graham Greene (*Our Man in Havana* could be a disappointment for Mme Ivasheva) and some of the 'angry young men,' above all John Wain, and, to a lesser degree, Kingsley Amis—and also C. P. Snow 'in his best works.' Mme Ivasheva finds to her disappointment little or nothing of these writers in the catalogues of the Soviet publishing houses—only the 'progressive,' *i.e.* openly communist or pro-communist writers, and Somerset Maugham ('we could have done without him'). The situation with regard to America is not much better—there is a new novel by Albert Maltz and several plays by Arthur Miller. 'But will the Soviet reader receive a correct picture of American literature on the basis of one Maltz novel and one or two of Miller's plays? There is nothing by Faulkner, a difficult writer, we admit, but undoubtedly an important one?'

Boris Izakov, a leading Soviet critic, is concerned with the second rate stuff that has infiltrated Soviet literature from abroad (*Lit. Gazeta*, 4 September 1958). John Steinbeck and Somerset Maugham have written many pot-boilers, books obviously produced mainly with an eye to commercial success; but Soviet publishing houses and translators hardly ever differentiate between the important works of these authors and their lesser books. On the Soviet stage there are performances of Sardou, Deval, and a 'pre-revolutionary play by Jerome K. Jerome that has again been a tremendous success.' But Izakov waits in vain for Brecht's *Mother Courage*, *Herr Puntila*, some of Shaw's plays (*The Applecart*, *Cæsar and Cleopatra*); Jean Giraudoux's anti-capitalist satires are not performed in the Capital and the big cities. Izakov admits that it is not always easy to find one's way between the first-class and the second-rate in foreign literature and art. This demands accurate criteria of both 'ideinost and artistic taste. Ready prescriptions covering all eventualities do not exist. But it is clear: the second-rate stuff should be left to the West in both politics and arts . . . .' One contemporary Western author who has irritated Soviet critics more than any other is Albert Camus. It has not been easy to find a suitable label to classify Camus, but Soviet literary historians have certainly tried hard. Iakov Elsberg, himself a former (1936) 'enemy of the people,' defines Camus in *Kommunist* (1958, 12, p. 50) as a writer for whom the people does not exist—only millions of scattered individuals. According to Camus (*pace* Elsberg) man is unable to perceive reality. 'In the last resort, the purpose of these views is to demoralise the people, to hinder its struggle for progressive aims.' N. Razgovorov (*Lit. Gazeta*, 25 September 1958), describes Camus as an obscurantist and spreader of obscurantism. He complains of Camus' tendency to make an abstraction of any given subject and his theory of all-embracing guilt, the general trend towards evil that is reflected in many of Camus' works. 'Such a theory is obviously very convenient for those who support the evil that exists in the world. If all are guilty, nobody is, and one should not continue the fight.' Commenting on a favourable profile of Camus in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Razgovorov reaches the conclusion that Camus' 'moral-philosophic code serves as a clear illustration of the subjectivist weapons by means of which bourgeois ideology defends itself today against the materialistic view of society that is making more and more progress.' He calls the reasons given by the Swedish Academy for bestowing the Nobel Prize on Camus 'paradoxical, to say the least,' and stresses the pessimism, lack of faith, and nihilist desperation that is so loudly preached by contemporary (non-communist) literature. 'All this is merely evidence for its utter exhaustion—the time has come for a general overhaul . . . .'

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Nekrasov in Italy

One of the more interesting and attractive figures in post-war Soviet literature is Viktor Nekrasov. His war book (*In the trenches of Stalingrad*) and post-war novel (*The Home Town*) stand out from the bulk of Soviet literary products by their freshness and honesty. The same writer's travelogue (*First Acquaintance*, published in *Novy Mir* 7 and 8, 1958) is of considerable interest for the same reasons. Nekrasov, an architect by profession, comments at great length on the hideous pseudo-monumental and pseudo-popular building style of Mussolini's Italy, and by obvious implication on the pseudo-monumental and pseudo-popular buildings nearer home. But the main interest is not in such professional observations; his writing is permeated with a willingness to learn, to compare, to enjoy Paris ('the most literary and most artistic of all cities'), Florence, and Rome. He spent in all one day in Paris; it is doubtful whether any recent tourist, Soviet or other, has written with such enthusiasm about the French capital—or has walked so many miles in one day in Paris streets. Nekrasov's predilections, as a foreign traveller, are, at any rate, distinctly individualistic. His account opens with an anti-climax: A suspicious looking individual (*i.e.* Viktor Nekrasov) is arrested by a French policeman while photographing the Palais Chaillot. But he is neither beaten up nor maltreated; *le flic* parts as (almost) a friend. Like many other tourists, Nekrasov visited the Olivetti factory in Ivrea; he is impressed, but the undue eagerness of the guide who draws unfavourable comparisons with the standard of life in Russia makes him instinctively reluctant to believe her. But he remembers in time that foreign visitors to Moscow are with similar insistence given to understand that the Moscow metro is the best in the world. 'One should not always say that we have the best metro in the world, that Stalingrad was the turning-point in the war against Hitler, that Eisenstein's *Potemkin* was a milestone in the history of the cinema, that many Western writers were pupils of Tolstoi and that all producers learned from Stanislavski. All this is well known and constant repetition only produces ridicule. One should not think that if we criticise the pictures of Aleksander Gerasimov or the architecture of the new Kreshatik in Kiev, we thereby deal a blow at our fatherland.' Nekrasov also criticises some of his compatriots for undue seriousness: 'we tend to forget that with a joke one can sometimes more easily gain friends, and, if necessary, rebuff those who are not our friends . . . .' A big stumbling block in contact with the West is ignorance of foreign languages. 'We talk about Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, etc., and they ask us about Corrado Alvaro, Cesare Pavese, Umberto Saba, Elio Vitorini, etc.—writers of European renown whose books have been published for many years . . . . I remember how awkward it was for us, Soviet writers, when Alberto Moravia asked us once in Leningrad about Kafka. We looked at each other—we had never heard that name. It is quite possible that they attribute undue significance to him in the West (I say it is possible, because I never read him), but it would have done no harm if we had at least heard about him, since his books have been translated into almost all languages.' Nekrasov met Italian communist newspaper editors who complained that they would like to make use of Soviet news and features but find it exceedingly difficult, not only because 'there are apparently no traffic accidents in the Soviet Union.' There are some acid remarks about the lengthy standard prefaces that have to be digested before the author reveals at last whatever idea or news he wishes to present. And there is an ominous *obiter dictum* about an absence of information that invariably produces rumours.

Nekrasov is impressed by a young Jesuit who plays football and has read Soviet literature; he finds that clothes are cheaper in Italy than in the Soviet Union, while food is more expensive. He talked to a group of leading Italian intellectuals about Hungary. 'I would not say that these hours were the easiest in my life.' In a Ravenna church he sees the grave of Vladimir Peniakov, and since he has not heard about the exploits of the Eighth Army in the Egyptian desert, he assumes that this was a Soviet compatriot who organised the Italian underground. There is much praise of Curzio Malaparte, who refused extreme unction and became a member of the Communist party on his deathbed. There is a very sarcastic review of the Russian emigré paper in Paris and similar observations in close accordance with the party line. By and large,

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however, Nekrasov's Notes from France and Italy are surprisingly fair and free of prejudice and conceit, occasionally even full of admiration.

The Afro-Asian writers

The Writers Conference in Tashkent (October 1958) was convened and organised by the Afro-Asian Solidarity committee in Cairo (December 1957). The meeting received considerable publicity in the Soviet press and radio, which described the 'spirit of Tashkent,' a phrase that was used by Khrushchev himself as an extension of the spirit of Bandung and Cairo. It could also be considered as a continuation—*mutatis mutandis*—of the communist-sponsored writers conferences that took place in the nineteen-thirties in Western Europe and the United States. The great majority of the participants then and now were non-communists; the common denominator in the thirties was the struggle against fascism (after August 1939—the struggle against war), while the emphasis at Tashkent, and similar meetings now is on anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, and anti-Westernism in general. Whereas Soviet attempts to win friends and influence people among Western writers have not, of course, been given up, it has apparently been realised in Moscow that such activities among Asian and African writers are nowadays far more promising. From Soviet accounts about meetings with Western writers it appears that even the most 'progressive' of the Western interlocutors have brought up such inconvenient issues as Hungary, Pasternak, Socialist Realism, the Soviet attitude towards Yugoslavia and Poland, etc. Asian and African writers, on the other hand, including some without pronounced sympathies for communist ideas, have shown little interest in these questions, and are consequently less likely to be antagonised by what may appear to them issues of secondary importance. It seems obvious that much greater political dividends can be reaped by the Soviet Union in Asia and Africa on the basis of a much smaller investment. The implications have not been lost on those responsible, and there is much evidence for a further stepping up of Soviet cultural activities in Asia and Africa. Soviet publishing houses have published in connection with the Tashkent conference several volumes of translations from Arabic, Hindustani, and other Eastern languages, and more such books have been announced. At the same time the translation of Soviet books into Asian and African languages is to be increased, and cultural contacts with these countries are to be intensified.

The two hundred odd participants in the Tashkent conference came from fifty odd Asian and African countries. The Soviet Politburo was represented by N. A. Mukhitdinov, the Chinese party by Mao Dun, one of the leading party officials responsible for cultural affairs. The Soviet delegation included several 'European' Russians (such as Nikolai Tikhonov) but those of 'Asian' origin such as Sherif Rashidov, Mehti Hussein, Samed Vurgun et al were much more in evidence. There was a sprinkling of European communist writers (Theun de Vries, Harold Hauser, Jan Drda), and William DuBois the veteran American Negro public figure, put in an unscheduled appearance. The delegation of the United Arab Republic did not include the better known writers from Egypt and Syria, but consisted mainly of journalists and cultural officials such as Yussef as Sibai and Muhammad Khalafallah Ahmad. Prominent among the Indian delegation were communists such as Mulk Raj Anand and Tarashankar Bannerjee. Most of the visitors from the smaller African and Asian countries were non-communists, and included a fair percentage of fellow-travellers.

The conference agenda had two main items: 1. 'The Development of literature and culture in general in the various Asian and African countries and their rôle in the struggle for the progress of mankind, for national independence, the fight against colonialism, for freedom and peace all over the world,' and 2. 'The cultures of the peoples of Asia and Africa and their ties with the culture of the West.' Some speakers in the debates dealt mainly with the political and cultural problems of their respective countries, the heritage of colonialism, the necessity to fight against racialism and against the danger of an atomic war. Others, such as the Sudanese Mohi ed Din Saber, were more specific and said that 'one of the most important problems is to overcome racial chauvinism that is assiduously supported by the American imperialists in the African colonies, especially in the south of the continent. While aspiring

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towards world domination, America oppresses these completely innocent Negroes (in Africa)' (*Pravda*, 10 October). Some Soviet delegates argued that a distinction should be made between Dulles and Field-marshal Montgomery on the one hand, and Western 'progressive' writers on the other ('just as we differentiated between Hitler and Goebbels—and Goethe and Heine'). The chief Chinese delegate took a less charitable view, especially of American culture, which he defined as a 'composite mixture of degeneracy, pornography, and crime.'

Soviet correspondents at the conference put great emphasis on the extra-mural activities and impressions of the delegates: 'I saw how the eyes of a Negro writer from the Gold Coast filled with tears when Russian children gave him flowers. I saw the face of a visitor from the Cameroons light up when workers of the Tashkent textile factory spontaneously invited him home as a guest' (Kremnev in *Novoe Vremia*). Soviet spokesmen frequently stressed that the cultural heritage of the East was superior to that of the West; whether such remarks represented their true feelings is uncertain, but the political effect was at any rate desirable. The appeal of the Tashkent conference, published on the last day, did not once mention (as has been the routine in such documents) the advantages of the communist system, and eschewed even the use of the very word socialism, concentrating on the necessity of the common struggle against Western colonialism. It contains the somewhat surprising assertion that 'as writers we fully realise that the great and joyful cause of literary and artistic creation flourishes only in conditions of freedom.' It appears, however, that the freedom referred to is not freedom of artistic creation, and implies no criticism of the Soviet or Chinese domestic scene; it is freedom from foreign (Western) oppression and exploitation.

The retrospective prospects

1959 is a notable year. It is 25 years in time since the achievement of socialism ('the first stage of communism') was proclaimed, and 25 years from the date to which the emergence of the 'cult of personality' is officially assigned. 1959 is also equidistant from another fateful year, 1984. We have it on the authority of Mr Khrushchev that in 15 years time the Soviet Union will overtake the United States in *per capita* production and the conditions for full communism will be created. In 25 years the second and higher stage will thus be reached.

The highlights of Soviet literature in 1958 were few and far between. There was the new 'sentimental novel' by Vera Panova, describing student life in the twenties, a novel which immediately provoked an irritable outburst in *Lit. Gazeta* for its outspokenness, and a new novel by Daniel Granin, *After the Wedding* (*Oktyabr*, 1958, 7), even more remarkable for its explicitness. Granin's short story in *Literaturnaia Moskva*, 'Personal Opinion,' was one of the heretical writings which provoked the anger of the *apparatchiki* and one of the highlights of the second 'thaw.' *After the Wedding* is remarkable not only for its description of the workings of the Soviet secret police and for a vivid picture of the ordeal which the Soviet citizens had to pass through when they found themselves in its hands. It also contains a bitter denunciation of the post-war purges, as well as an attack on the cultural stranglehold in that period. One of the heroes of the novel, the factory director Leonid Prokofievich Longinov, has been through a police interrogation, where he has undergone the usual treatment to force him to 'confess.' He is thus related in a way to the literary prototype of such figures, Koestler's Rubashov. He stands up to his tormentors, opposing to them his faith in the communist ideal, but as a piece of (socialist) realist writing the story is much more convincing in describing *le parti réel* rather than *le parti idéal*.

Reality thus somehow finds its way into Soviet fiction, despite the efforts to substitute for it ideological fiction. The silence is not total; in the long run, Soviet literature may perhaps move closer to life despite controls and supervision. The year 1958, black as it may look to those directly affected, provides nevertheless some ground for cautious optimism for the future, whatever the immediate prospects may be.

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THE BROTHERS YERSHOV

An Exercise in the New Orthodoxy

George Katkov

THE shock administered by Khrushchev's revelations at the twentieth Party congress has found its most powerful echo in the literature of the country. The period in which authors were relatively free to criticize, according to their own lights, existing and past Soviet conditions, is now regarded as a brief and mild epidemic of revisionism which infected unstable characters when the Party's intentions in denouncing Stalin's cult of personality had been not fully understood. Since then many who took part in the literary movement of 1956 have recanted or have fallen silent. But the impression produced by such publications as the two anthologies *Literary Moscow* (No. 1, 1955 and No. 2, 1956), or Dudintsev's *Not by bread alone*, to name only those best known outside the Soviet Union, can not easily be forgotten. Their success has been explained by their sensational nature, and this is certainly correct. But what was so sensational about them? Neither from a formal point of view nor by their contents were they in any way revolutionary or extravagant. What was new about them and what determined their popular success was the fact that, for the first time for many years, certain well-known aspects of Soviet reality were mirrored in literary production and that the authors expressed reactions which, far from being original or individual, closely corresponded to what 'everybody was thinking' but nobody ever dared to express openly in speech or writing. In other words, the literary output of 1956 was successful because, instead of serving as a mouthpiece of official policy, the writers tended, however timidly, to express the thoughts and feelings of various groups of the Soviet population.

Since then, however, a different type of novel has made its appearance, skilfully combining critical and conformist elements, so that the reader, having had his appetite for denunciation largely satisfied, is led on to quiescent and complete faith in the wisdom of the Party authorities. In *The Battle on the Way* (1957), Galina Nikolaeva managed to blend both elements with particular dexterity. She has been rewarded not only by the virtually unanimous praise of the Soviet critics, but also by a highly favourable reference in the official magazine *Komunist*, which rebuked one of the few dissenting critics who had dared to point out the extreme artificiality of Nikolaeva's construction.[1]

Nikolaeva's success in camouflaging a conformist novel as a denunciatory one has recently inspired other writers to put the same technique at the service of possibly more ambitious political aims than Khrushchevite conformism. We can now speak of a kind of *zubatovshchina* in Soviet literature.[2]

The newest contribution to this type of literature is the novel of a relatively young but already well-established writer, Vsevelod Kochetov, published in the June and July 1958 numbers of the Leningrad magazine *Neva* and entitled *The Brothers Yershov*.[3] The brothers belong to a family of steel workers in a Black

[1] The criticism of N's novel appeared in the Leningrad magazine *Neva* in January and the reply in *Kommunist* in March 1958.

[2] Zubatov was a gendarmerie officer who in 1901-3 organised a police-controlled workers' movement. The organisations established with police support were intended to become channels of police control over the incipient workers' movement. They were, however, also penetrated by revolutionaries who thus tried to compromise these bogus organisations and their clandestine sponsors. The complicated interplay of double agents and cross-purpose actions undermined the morale of both the revolutionary movement and the police agencies struggling against it.

[3] The novel has appeared also in a second version in a popular publication known as *Roman Gazeta* (Nos. 15 and 16), in half a million copies. This second version has been edited to tone down attacks on fellow writers and to play down the fears aroused by the Hungarian revolution. The present analysis is based mainly on the original version, but will point out certain deviations from it in the second edition.

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Sea port who become involved in a struggle with what can be termed "intellectual revisionists". Some of the revisionists are local men attached to the steel works, some have descended on this provincial town from Moscow, and are surrounded by the glamour which attaches in the Soviet Union to anything and anybody connected with the capital. The interest of the novel is certainly not in the plot—which is inept to a degree—but in the small episodes and asides. Kochetov's fire is directed not against those who, under the cloak of loyalty to the regime and conformism, are trying to prevent necessary reforms, but against those who are pressing for them on the same pretext. There is a kind of inversion of the denunciatory style of the 1956 writing. Thus, for instance, Kochetov introduces an inventor, a paranoiac and malevolent character who attacks the honest works director for not paying sufficient attention to his inventions, which are in fact mythical. The inversion of the situation in Dudintsev's novel is unmistakeable. By a similar allusive technique Kochetov attacks Ehrenburg's *Thaw*, which he obviously considers to lie at the root of all the trouble in Soviet literature. The thaw season of the year is referred to as a season 'of mud and slush'. In an episode which has no direct relation to the plot of his story, he introduces a painter who professes advanced views in a slapdash and loud manner, abusing Soviet painting as naturalism and photography, and clamouring for new forms and impressionist methods. He tells the story of an unrecognized genius who was always starving but would not sell his brushes. He would not paint cheerful pictures of life on the virgin lands or of steel workers, but made portraits of his crippled wife and painted old willow trees and Moscow alleys, all most remarkable works of art. The allusion to a character in Ehrenburg's *Thaw* is unmistakeable. The episode ends with the painter, who has tired his hosts with the story of his unrecognized genius friend, referring to his own parents as 'followers of naive communism'. 'What is this naive communism?' asks his hostess, herself a communist enthusiast. 'Naive communism?' replies the painter, 'well, you know, this is what they learned in the days when they were members of the Komsomol. They ask for faithfulness to the idea in everything. The purity of ideas! Well, in a word, these are the views of the epoch of the civil war and the first Five Year Plan. The concept "Life" does not exist for them, they know only one thing, "Struggle".' 'Your parents are remarkable people and it is a great pity that you are not at all like them', is the annihilating retort of the hostess to the decadent painter who has gone too far.

ANOTHER victim of Kochetov's concealed literary denunciation is the dramatist Pogodin. Pogodin's play *Petrarch's Sonnet* was published in *Literaturnaya Moskva* in 1956; its theme can be described as the problem of Party control of platonic love. The Party authorities in a large Siberian centre where gigantic construction works are being carried out are faced with the question of what to do with the chief engineer, a middle-aged married man, who is writing poetic letters to a girl whom he does not even attempt to meet. Opinions are divided as to how far the Party should interfere in such private affairs. The play ends—rather inconsequently—with the final parting between the Siberian Petrarch and his Laura, a scene interrupted by the sound of the tocsin and the announcement that the Siberian *taiga* is on fire. In *The Brothers Yershov* Kochetov refers to a play given on the stage of the theatre in the little Black Sea town, and grows indignant about the prevalence of love affairs between elderly men and young women on the Soviet stage and in Soviet literature; he describes the final 'shameful scene' in the play:

'The heroine, a somewhat over-ripe girl of 25, opens her lips to receive the kiss of the ageing hero, against the background of the burning *taiga*. In the preceding four acts he had driven her into semi-delirium, and what is he doing now? It seems he is glad to have the *taiga* burning and to be forced to rush away to the scene of the catastrophe. He gets rid of the girl who is longing for him, and runs away shouting sympathetic words'. Again, the allusion to the last scene of Pogodin's play is unmistakeable, and the reason for Kochetov's wrath is also given on the same page. One of Kochetov's characters, an honest down-to-earth secretary of the town's Party committee, explains that in the play the Party secretary is represented as a

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magnate, a bureaucrat, a courtier. 'For some of our writing comrades', says the secretary of the city Party committee, 'there are no other characterisations for people like me'.

In the same conversation the factory director advises the secretary to let the investigating authorities deal with some of the 'revisionists', including the inventor. The secretary demurs and answers in a tone of reprimand: 'That is just what they say about some of our leading cadres, that they do not tolerate any criticism, that they have become gentry, that they condone each other's mistakes and that if they take a dislike to somebody they will get him into prison'. But the factory director is not frightened. He reproaches his friend the secretary for excessive idealism which makes him an easy prey to his enemies. 'The people you are quoting say that people like you and me are Stalinists, that we are made of iron and concrete, and that we resisted the decisions of the 20th Party congress, and they interpret these decisions in such a way as to suggest that we ought to drop the cause of the Revolution and start to introduce, little by little, bourgeois democratic methods'.

KOCHETOV'S novel is remarkable not only for these slightly veiled polemics with 'revisionist' literature in the Soviet Union. His description of the great disaffection of 1956 among the intelligentsia is without parallel and contains admissions which have never been made openly elsewhere in Soviet letters or in the Press. In conversation with the Party secretary, the factory director urges action against the revisionists. 'Life, my dear friend, will decide which of us two was right. I understand your considerations. What are they? You think: reaction, opportunism, revisionism, all these are raging abroad. And we, we are a rock, a solid monolith. I agree with you completely on this: our Party and our people are indeed a rock and a monolith. We have stood up to quite a lot of things in our life. We have borne a burden at which one can only marvel. But, my dear friend, not everybody is ready to accept with joy the strong leadership of the dictatorship of the proletariat. There are some who would like to live with greater licence. Don't you agree?'

The theme of danger from those who are not reconciled to the regime comes out clearest in the discussion of the Hungarian events of 1956 between a communist steel worker and the same secretary of the Party city committee. The steel worker says that his heart aches at the sight of the offensive of the counter-revolution, 'or, as they now call it, "reaction".'

'Yes, yes', answers the secretary, approvingly, 'these are terrible events. But I shall tell you in secret, as one communist to another, that our government, at the request of the Hungarians, has issued orders to the Soviet troops to help the Hungarian people to put an end to the counter-revolution. According to my information, the results have already proved to be most satisfactory'.

'This is wonderful', replies the steel worker, 'but is Hungary really cut off from us by an impenetrable wall? Do not the enemies of communism harass us all they can?'

'Of course they do, it is an all-out offensive, and a fierce one . . . And what are we going to do? Are we going to sit and wait *until they start hanging us by the feet on the very same trees which we have planted?*'[4]

'But who is going to hang us?' asks the secretary, laughing.

'And who is hanging the Hungarian comrades?'

'They have stopped hanging them'.

'But they did so before, and who did it?'

'They brought in people from the West. They incited those who were not steadfast. They handed out sub-machine guns to boys.'

'To boys, indeed! But those weren't boys who threw my brother Platon out of his job at our works. Engineer V. is not a boy. He even had an opportunity to render faithful service to Hitler . . . No. These are not boys. These are adult parasites in action.'

The secretary is shaken but remains sceptical. It is clear from the fate prepared for him that Kochetov disapproves of his good-natured complacency.

Who are the 'adult parasites' suspected of an inclination to start hanging honest communists? Kochetov describes them as a profoundly

[4] My italics, G.K. All references to the killing of communists have been deleted from the second version.

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divided group of men with frustrated ambitions, some of whom had compromised themselves by collaborating with the Germans, who had been punished, and now want their own back. These people, although not organised, have influence everywhere in the town. They spread dirty rumours. They bait an honest works director. They have penetrated theatrical circles. These people, Kochetov says in the words of his hero steel worker, 'seem to be discussing socialist realism, whereas in fact they . . .'[5] 'No! this cannot be tolerated any longer! One cannot remain silent, especially if one thinks of other things. Ask the young students about what is going on in their circles. Their young heads just turn round, there is no clarity. All sorts of obscure muddle finds its way in and flourishes among them'.

There is a scene which explains what is meant by the 'obscure muddle' which is said to flourish among young men. At a party where students and young workers meet, a medical student is involved in an argument with his colleagues about the lack of revolutionary spirit among present day workers. 'Of course now they are literate', he says, 'but what is the value of such literacy? Where are the ideas which have always inspired the working class? Where is their revolutionary fervour?' Some of his colleagues explain to the student that the revolutionary fervour is now finding its expression in the figures of output above the plan, in the building of houses, in the progress of rationalisation of production methods. 'That is not what I mean', answers the obstinate medical student. 'Where is mass action, concerted action?' 'What action? Would you like to see a strike? Against whom should we strike?' asks one of the engineers.[6] 'That's an easy one', says the student, getting more and more excited. 'There is a lot of bureaucratism, all sorts of abuses, official magnates have made their appearance.' 'Listen citizen',[7] the engineer answers, 'have you met them, these magnates, have you had dealings with them, or have you read about them in *Novy Mir*?' At this point one of the students breaks in to explain that his disaffected colleague listens to the Voice of America, and 'to the voices of all sorts of free Europes'. He had already received a warning. 'They told him that his brains are weak and cannot withstand such rubbish and therefore he should not listen to rubbish.' 'Among the rubbish, you will find kernels of truth', the medical student says, and is then arraigned by the others, who all claim to be following in the footsteps of their revolutionary parents. 'Enough of ancestors and grand-parents', the medical student replies. 'We know very well how things stood with them. But our own life remains somehow vague in your description.' At this he is put to shame by one of his girl colleagues. 'Look at this worker', she tells him. 'His grandparents went about shabby and freezing, and you, look at your suit, at the wonderful material it's made of. Did the Voice of America give you that? Have you gone hungry at least one day in a month? You are dressed, fed, and given lodging, you are given a scholarship. You are taught. Aren't you ashamed of yourself? Go to the capitalists, you fool! Yes, a fool you are. You have heard about it all on the foreign broadcasts, you have read about it in stupid books, and now you are repeating all that nonsense. Go to the capitalists—get higher education there, start working there as a physician and then we will hear what you have to say.'

KOCHETOV does more than denounce the 'unstable' or 'disruptive' elements in Soviet society; he criticises his positive heroes as well for their slackness in face of the encroachments of reactionary mentality. The city Party secretary dies of a heart attack when he learns of the machinations of the wicked inventor whom in his ill-advised benevolence he had tried to encourage. The moral of the book is precisely the need for joint action by the privileged workers and the Party apparatus to withstand the wave of rising individualism, which would otherwise lead to counter-revolution. Kochetov attacks the relaxation of Party controls in art, and especially in dramatic art, explicitly. It is naive not to realise, he says, that the wicked,

[5] The sentence is unfinished in the text.

[6] The reference to a strike is omitted from the second version.

[7] The expression citizen, most unusual at such a party, indicates that the conversation is taking a nasty turn and the medical student is no longer to be considered a 'comrade'.

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clever, and well-organised bourgeoisie would get hold of art immediately for political purposes as soon as Party controls are withdrawn. The same moral is drawn, implicitly, for science, where only Party vigilance can prevent charlatans from making mischief.

The main danger lies, however, not so much in artists who have gone astray or in scientists whose personal ambition makes them lose sight of the social and economic implications of their work, but in those Soviet citizens who have lost faith in the ideals of the revolution and in the prospect of building communism.

The chief villain in Kochetov's novel is not a foreign agent or a former kulak. Orleantsev is a high-ranking bureaucrat, with a good wartime record, a good social mixer, an excellent committee man, a man of the world with a taste for the fleshpots and an inclination to cultural snobbery acquired from his many visits abroad. In his limitless egotism he uses the weaknesses of all the oppositionist elements of Soviet society as an instrument for his personal advancement. His cardinal offence is his total disbelief in the cause he purports to serve. In an intimate conversation with his mistress Zoya, Orleantsev develops his philosophy. 'There are no ideal human beings. Every one of us is good in one respect and necessarily bad in another . . . And the more sides there are to a man, the more interesting he is. Otherwise we would all be moulded alike. The boredom that would then reign in a world!' Zoya, the timid secretary of the works director, defends her Soviet idealism: 'I am a tiny, a very insignificant person. But if I once started thinking that every good and considerable personality is at the same time a contemptible weakling or even a rascal, what would happen then, darling?' She reproaches her lover for thinking badly of other people, while pretending to be good himself. 'This is not what I mean', answers Orleantsev. 'I do not claim to be good. There is more than enough evil in me, and I know it. To pretend I am good would be to deceive myself and others.' 'But to pretend that good people are wicked is also deception.' 'There are no good people, there never have been and there never will be.' 'And Lenin?' is Zoya's last argument. 'Orleantsev remained silent for a long time until he had smoked half his long cigarette. "It is impossible to argue with you," he said, "you are not playing according to the rules, and that is unfair. Let's go to bed".'

Every Soviet reader will grasp the meaning of this passage. The ultimate danger for the regime is the loss of faith in the wisdom and goodness of the Revolution personified in the by now mythical figure of Lenin. This lack of faith can befall persons high in the social hierarchy, and must be fought by the concerted action of the industrial workers and the party apparatus.

Kochetov denounces the public expression of discontent and any attempt to satisfy spiritual and artistic aspirations outside the channels controlled by the party. But he dresses up his denunciation as an attack on the new Soviet gentry, to which most of the rebellious intellectuals belong, at least in the eyes of the 'toiling masses'. The disguise has not deceived the intellectuals themselves, especially since Kochetov has been rewarded by the editorship-in-chief of the *Literary Gazette*. At a meeting of producers and theatre workers in October it was announced that a stage version of Kochetov's novel is being prepared and will be presented on the occasion of the 21st Party congress. There were strong protests; one playright, Arbuzov, in an exceptionally angry speech, remarked that he would not like to stand next to Kochetov even on the stage. Praise for Kochetov was forthcoming from the representatives of the Ministry of Culture.

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Ingredients as Prescribed

RECIPE FOR WRITERS: TIPICHNOST AND NARODNOST

Maurice Friedberg

OF the basic tenets of Soviet literature *ideinost* and *partiinost* are those best-known and most discussed. However, these principles of political tendentiousness and didacticism in content are very intimately linked with the less-publicised postulates of *tipichnost* and *narodnost*, which are more concerned with the literary form.

The concept of *tipichnost* or 'typicalness', it appears, has its roots in Friedrich Engels' definition of Realism as the treatment of 'typical characters in typical situations'. Gradually, however, this anti-Romantic definition underwent revision and, to paraphrase a postulate of Marxism, the quantitative changes grew into qualitative ones. Consequently, the currently accepted definitions of *tipichnost* bear little resemblance to characteristics usually associated with Realism in literature. Thus, according to the 1955 edition of the Soviet *Short Dictionary of Literary Terminology*,

> The typical must not be confused with that which is frequently encountered. The essence of a phenomenon, the typical, can be manifested not only in mass phenomena, but in individual ones as well; it can be manifested in the behaviour of individual people, or even of a single person.[1]

For the author of a Soviet literature textbook, *tipichnost* requires the writer to '. . . present the new, the growing, which, while not yet typical today, is certainly typical of tomorrow'.[2] The concept of *tipichnost*, according to the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia*, is based on 'comprehension of the laws and perspectives of future social development'.[3]

This understanding of the 'typical' accounts for a number of characteristics of Soviet literature.

It helps to explain, for example, the pervading optimism. If, as is claimed, the immutable laws of social development guarantee the success of the efforts to build a communist society, then there can be little doubt as to what should be the 'typical' outcome in literature of a conflict between the upright communist and the anti-Soviet villain (or the well-intentioned but mistaken communist protagonist). Thus virtue is bound to triumph, vice must be punished, and error corrected. Happy endings are as obligatory in an average work of Soviet literature as they are in Hollywood or, more correctly perhaps, in a pseudo-classical drama. The dénouement must be happy even when it is unjustified by the course of the narrative or the psychology of the characters. In many works of Soviet fiction the final triumph of the 'good' and the 'true' over 'evil' and 'error' is ensured by the sudden intervention of a higher force, represented by the Communist Party and, before 1953, Stalin. Such *deus ex machina* dénouements are to be found at all times even among the better works of Soviet literature.

Bread, for example, is a typical play of the first Five-Year Plan period. Its author, Vladimir Kirshon, has recently been cautiously 'rehabilitated'. The conflict between the two central characters in the play—both of them, incidentally, communists—is resolved by the appearance of the Party's latest decree on agricultural policies.

The happy ending in Mikhail Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Upturned* is made possible by Stalin's article 'Dizzy With Success', which denounced excesses in the collectivization campaign.

The victory of the forward-looking officers over the conservative ones in Alexander Korneichuk's wartime play *The Front*—a work so wholeheartedly endorsed by the Party that

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[1] *Kratkii slovar literaturovedcheskikh terminov*, L. Timofeev and N. Vengrov, Editors (Moscow, 1955), p. 147.

[2] L. I. Timofeev, *Teoriya literatury* (Moscow, 1948), p. 302.

[3] *Bolshaia sovetskaia entsiklopediya*, 42, p. 451.

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it was unique in having been serialized in *Pravda* —is sealed by the appearance of a newspaper editorial and, more significantly, an order from Stalin replacing the inefficient army commander.

The doubts of Colonel Voropaev in Peter Pavlenko's *Happiness*, a famous postwar Soviet novel, are resolved by an unexpected encounter with Stalin who, equally unexpectedly, knows all about the Colonel's problems. The demobilized soldier finds happiness in productive work.

In many post-Stalin works of fiction, too, the unjustly persecuted protagonist is vindicated as a result of the Central Committee's decisions on 'rehabilitations'—such as, for example, the Jewish woman doctor in Ilya Ehrenburg's *The Thaw*.

Conversely, works without 'happy endings' have been few in Soviet literature since the 1920's. A famous exception is Sholokhov's *Quiet Flows the Don*—which may be one of the reasons why this great novel is usually placed on the 'recommended' reading lists in Soviet schools, whereas *Virgin Soil Upturned* is required reading. One of the noteworthy features of Vladimir Dudintsev's 'revisionist' novel *Not By Bread Alone* was its ending—the villain Drozdov is neither punished nor reformed; indeed, he reaches a higher position of power. The optimism of Soviet literature is quite eloquently illustrated by the title of a play by Vsevolod Vishnevsky, in which most of the protagonists die; the play is entitled *The Optimistic Tragedy*.

THE concept of the 'typical' thus reduces the problems of human existence as a literary topic to functions of politics and economics. It has all but banished from Soviet literature the elements of the tragic—the themes of life and death, good and evil, happiness and the destiny of mankind. These questions, once the basis of some of the greatest works of Russian literature—*Crime And Punishment*, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, *The Lower Depths*—which were once, as Dostoevsky put it in *The Brothers Karamazov*, the favourite topic for discussion among 'Russian boys', have disappeared from Soviet literature because they have, according to Soviet spokesmen, been solved and answered. Conflicting views on these questions are, therefore, no longer 'typical'. And the Soviet writer's decision on what to consider 'typical' must be arrived at after very careful deliberation. As the 1955 *Dictionary of Literary Terminology* put it (p. 148): 'The writer's opinion on what constitutes the *typical* in life, the features described by him as *typical*, that which he *typifies* in his works—all these reflect first and foremost the writer's political views.'

Linked with the notion of the 'typical' are the characteristics of the positive hero in Soviet fiction. He must be the 'new Soviet man', a builder of communism, courageous, hard-working, and convinced of the righteousness of the Soviet cause. Such were the heroes of many of the Stalin prize-winning books, for instance Boris Polevoi's *Story of A Real Man*, Semen Babaevsky's *The Knight of the Golden Star*, and Vasili Azhaev's *Far from Moscow*. And, judging by Vsevolod Kochetov's recent novel, *The Brothers Yershov*, the positive heroes of 'post-revisionist' Soviet literature are not likely to be much different. They, too, will probably be 'typical of tomorrow' rather than of contemporary Soviet men and women.

The requirement of *tipichnost* is, it appears, the underlying reason for the absence of satire in present-day Soviet literature—this in spite of the frequent appeals for 'Soviet Gogols and Shchedrins'. The great satirical works among the Russian classics—*The Inspector General*, *Dead Souls*, *The Golovlev Family*—are noteworthy for the total absence of any positive personages. It would be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to follow this tradition without violating the canon of the 'typical'. The late Mikhail Zoshchenko, for example, was frequently accused of describing non-typical situations—even though it was admitted that the 'bourgeois survivals' described in Zoshchenko's works still existed. Perhaps this is also one reason for the reluctance on the part of the literary authorities to republish on any appreciable scale the satirical works of Ilf and Petrov.

In the early postwar years certain Soviet writers took the official notion of the 'typical' so seriously that they decided to dispense altogether with conflict as a literary device, since, they claimed, in the present Soviet society of non-antagonistic classes—let alone in the

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future classless society—there can be no true villains, and hence no serious conflicts. Conflict, which is the vehicle of action in a literary work, has thus 'withered away'. True, the 'no-conflict' theory was subsequently denounced. In vol. 42 (1956) of the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia* we read:

> Progressive personages are not the only ones that can be typical. Representatives of reactionary social forces can also be depicted *as typical, i.e. historically doomed* under the pressure of the new and the progressive. (My itals. M.F.)

Thus the 'no-conflict' theory has been replaced by conflicts with pre-determined outcomes. Villains have reappeared in Soviet literature, but the notion of the 'typical' requires that they be discredited, reformed, or destroyed before the last page.

In the search for 'typical' situations which would prove acceptable to the authorities and still retain some semblance of real life in the USSR, writers have resorted to a number of stratagems. The practice of telling the truth though not the whole truth has been effectively satirized in a 'fable' entitled *Three Portraits* by Sergei Mikhalkov which appeared early in 1957, i.e. at the end of the 'thaw', in the second volume of the anthology *Literaturnaya Moskva*. The fable tells of a certain khan who had but a single eye and a single arm. The khan wanted to have his portrait painted. The first painter showed him as he really was, and was dismissed for crude naturalism. The second painted the khan with both eyes and arms, and was denounced for 'embellishing reality'. The third painter was more resourceful: he painted the khan in profile.

The Romantic definition of the 'typical' has thus placed the Soviet writer in the position of a visionary who must describe in positive terms a life that he has never seen, and yet present it as the reality of the present day. He is thus forced to invent situations and a psychology of his protagonists that are 'typical' of the future happy society. Somewhat similar attempts were made more than a century ago by a number of Russian writers who tried to present idyllic pictures of 'typical' scenes from Russia's past. Speaking of the failure of these attempts, the famous critic Vissarion Belinsky wrote:

> The feelings and passions of the men of that world are so uniform in their manifestations, their social inter-relations so simple and uncomplicated, that all this could easily be exhausted by a single work of considerable talent.[4]

THE postulate of *narodnost*, or the 'popular' and the 'national', according to the same *Dictionary* (p. 84), '. . . requires from the artist simplicity, clarity, and expressiveness in the work's form, which must be accessible to the broad masses of the people, as well as simplicity and expressiveness in its language'. The opposite of *narodnost* is 'formalism': 'In literature, formalist works are characterized by an artificial confusion, ambiguous exposition, and complexity of language. Not infrequently they must be deciphered like a rebus'.[5]

The requirements of 'simplicity, clarity, and expressiveness', and the opprobrium attached to 'ambiguous exposition and complexity of language' are largely responsible for the static quality of the literary form in Soviet *belles lettres;* they have all but stifled innovation.

It is not that the discovery of new, effective literary devices is forbidden by the Union of Soviet Writers. But the search is made almost impossible since new literary forms are nearly always at first incomprehensible to the great majority of readers. The first performances of Chekhov's plays offer a fine example for twentieth-century Russia.

The Soviet writer, therefore, hesitates before risking an experiment in language and style which would of necessity be a violation of *narodnost*. Boris Pasternak's poetry has been sharply criticised for many years—ideological considerations quite apart—for its individualistic, 'difficult' form and language which, it was argued, made his poems incomprehensible to the masses. Similar charges were once made against the poet Ilya Selvinsky and others.

This attitude towards literary innovation constitutes a break with the literary traditions of pre-revolutionary Russia. In the middle of the twentieth century Soviet poets use the time-honoured forms of the Russian syllabo-tonic

[4] V. G. Belinsky, *Izbrannoe* (Moscow, 1954), p. 292.
[5] *Bolshaia sovetskaia . . .*, Vol. 45, p. 315.

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verse with almost no modifications. In nineteenth-century Russia the poets *did* experiment. Even the first of the great Russian poets, Alexander Pushkin, took cognizance of the fact that literary forms 'wear out' and become obsolete: towards the end of his career he inveighed against the four-foot iambic verse which he himself helped to popularize. The inevitability of evolution in literary form was also in the minds of the Russian poets at the beginning of our century who wanted to rejuvenate Russian verse. They believed in different approaches and the gospels they preached were many. Among the most fervent partisans of innovation was Vladimir Mayakovsky, who was to be later described by Stalin as 'the best poet of the Soviet epoch'. The young Mayakovsky was one of the signatories of the Manifesto of Russian Futurism which was significantly entitled 'A Slap in the Face of Public Taste'.

With its requirement of respect for what is said to be the 'public taste', *narodnost* makes similar experimentation nearly impossible in present-day Soviet poetry. In point of style Soviet poets display little variation. While poetry is more popular in the USSR than in any other country (with the possible exception of Japan), there is in all of the USSR not a single 'little' magazine devoted to 'vanguard' verse. The form of Soviet poetry at the present time is solidly academic and bears more resemblance to the verse of the nineteenth-century Russian gentry than to the poetry of revolt abroad or to the early Russian proletarian poets.

One might expect, perhaps, that the principle of *narodnost* would encourage 'folksy' language in literature, in particular in prose and drama. Such, however, is not the case. 'Simplicity' and 'clarity' have come to denote prosaic, respectable language, not too different from that employed in the Soviet Press. The lexical resources of the majority of the more recent works of Soviet literature reflect Stalin's definition of language in his postwar pronouncement on linguistics: 'language is the incarnation of thought in speech.' The language of these works is as uncomplicated and utilitarian as the ideas expressed in them. Language has become a mere tool for communicating ideas; it has all too frequently ceased to be the vehicle of the writer's imagination.

Indeed, in recent years some of the older writers have rewritten their earlier works to purge them of excessively 'difficult' or 'earthy' passages. A translation of these into English would fail to reflect the extent of stylistic and semantic change involved. Suffice it to mention, therefore, that these include the deletion of all obscenities, and most of the grammatical irregularities and peculiarities of dialect and slang. Among the most vivid examples of this procedure are the new editions of Fedor Gladkov's *Cement*, Mikhail Sholokhov's *Quiet Flows the Don*, and the tales of Alexander Malyshkin, in which the crude, illiterate workers, peasants, and Cossacks of the Civil War period now speak in an infinitely more polite and cultivated idiom.

IT is frequently argued that Soviet writing is heir to the traditions of nineteenth-century Russian literature, since these earlier writers, too, frequently used their works as vehicles for political ideas. The contention is usually supported by reference to the radical critics of the last century, in particular to Belinsky. But these critics approved of didacticism in literature only on condition that it did not interfere with literature's function as art. Thus, for example, Belinsky wrote: 'With whatever beautiful ideas a poem is filled and however much it deals with contemporary problems, if it has no poetry in it, it can neither contain beautiful ideas nor any problems'.[6] He also disapproved of narrow political sectarianism in literature, even when this did *not* interfere with its artistic qualities: 'The contents of art are not the problems of the day, but those of ages, not the interests of a country, but of the world, not the fate of parties, but of mankind.'[7]

The classics, even when they did embody a 'message', did so incidentally, by implication. Tolstoy did not editorialize against adultery in *Anna Karenina*, and Turgenev did not directly preach the abolition of serfdom in *A Sportsman's Sketches*. Soviet literature considers the delivery of the 'message'—the requirements of *ideinost* and *partiinost*—its primary duty, and performs

[6] Belinsky, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow, 1948), Vol. I, p. 789.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 431.

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it openly. Indeed, it is not at all unusual for a character in a Soviet novel to quote verbatim from a current issue of a Soviet newspaper, or from the writings of Lenin and Stalin.

The classics, moreover, defended the underdog and the non-conformist in his conflict with society: most of the works of nineteenth-century Russian literature belong either to the so-called 'philanthropic' tradition—which begins with Pushkin's *Bronze Horseman* and Gogol's *Overcoat* and continues until Chekhov and Kuprin—or to the tradition concerned with the rights of the individualist, whether the Byronic heroes of Lermontov or the embittered rebels of Dostoevsky. Soviet literature glorifies the strong and the 'well-adjusted' man—the Stakhanovite, the Party official, the soldier—and at the very best advises the 'errant' or less 'successful' individual how to mend his ways and thus conform to the demands of the State and win acceptance by the collective.

The classics—even the most opinionated among them—offered their protagonists an opportunity to express conflicting ideas, as witness the novels of Dostoevsky, in which atheists, socialists, and philistines are endowed with eloquence and convincing arguments, and they stimulated their readers to independent thinking. Soviet literature provides ready answers: the 'villain' is rarely given the opportunity to argue his case as skilfully and thoroughly as do Raskolnikov, Stavrogin, or Ivan Karamazov.

The Russian classics challenged an established order: they attacked autocracy, the institution of serfdom, the system of justice. Soviet literature aims at strengthening the existing order.

In short, the Russian classics are humane, reformist, and revolutionary; they are 'democratic' literature. Soviet writing, on the other hand, is intolerant of weakness and non-conformism; it continues the conservative and 'aristocratic' stream in the Russian literary tradition, rather than the radical.

The Soviet reading public has shown a striking preference for pre-Soviet literature at all times since the revolution. While exact figures cannot be obtained because of the gaps in Soviet publishing statistics, available data indicate that the best sellers in the forty years since the revolution have been Pushkin, Leo Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov, Gogol, Goncharov, Gorky, Alexander Ostrovsky, Sholokhov and Dostoevsky, in that order. The list includes only one Soviet author, Sholokhov, and one partly Soviet, Gorky, whose works, it should be noted, are set in pre-Soviet Russia, as is Sholokhov's major work. Further, the current printings of Soviet books indicate that this situation is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. An average Soviet novel is printed in fewer than 100,000 copies, while few of the Russian classics—not even the lesser ones—are reprinted in editions smaller than 250,000 copies. The managers of Soviet theatres have similar difficulties in the sales of tickets for the performances of Soviet plays, while the nineteenth-century classics always draw a full house. Some of the most successful Soviet films are adaptations of the Russian classics. The post-Stalin film output includes a significant number of them, the most recent being Pushkin's *Captain's Daughter* and Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*.

During his 1958 visit abroad Sholokhov was asked by newsmen to define Socialist Realism. At first he jokingly recalled the words of Alexander Fadeyev, for many years secretary-general of the Union of Soviet Writers, who committed suicide in 1956—'the devil alone knows what it is'. And then Sholokhov added in a serious vein: 'My answer would be that Socialist Realism is that which is written for the Soviet government in simple, comprehensive, artistic language.'[8]

It is perhaps this definition that offers a clue to the most basic trait which sets Soviet Russian literature apart from its nineteenth-century predecessor and from the other literatures of the world. It is not that only Soviet literature is 'simple, comprehensive, and artistic'. Nor is Soviet literature unique in being written for a government—the same was true of a significant part of European literature in the age of Enlightened Absolutism, including Russia under Peter the Great and Catherine II. It is the fact that in the USSR, for the first time in history, it is the Government, and not the individual writer, that has the final say on what is and what is not 'simple, comprehensive, and artistic'.

[8] *The New York Times*, 11 May 1958.

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Allegro moderato

THE SOVIET CONCERT HALL

Cecil Parrott

WHATEVER may be said in the West about Soviet literature, drama or art, Soviet music seems to have justified itself. If anyone were to dispute this, he could be referred to the superb artistry of instrumentalists like Oistrakh, Gillels, Rostropovich and Rikhter, the popularity outside Russia of the works of Shostakovich and Prokofiev, the almost legendary performances of classical ballet and native opera at the Bolshoi and Marinsky theatres, and, perhaps most important of all, the astonishing triumphs of Soviet youth at the various world *concours*. The facts speak for themselves and Soviet propaganda has no need to embellish them.

Music today has a privileged place within Russia. The regime regards it as an important adjunct to the pomp and pageantry of state and invokes its aid at all major diplomatic ceremonial. Is there any other country where every distinguished foreign visitor from Chou En-lai to Tito and from the Queen of the Belgians to the President of Finland is regaled not only with special performances at the opera and ballet but with concerts in the royal or presidential palace where the finest artists in the land perform? As a result of their appearances at the Bolshoi and in the Kremlin the musicians see more of the present rulers of Russia than any other class of the population.

There are several reasons why music should be accorded this favoured position. For one thing it offers the negative advantage of presenting less dangers to the current ideology than the spoken or written word, and the positive advantage of being able to project its appeal across all frontiers. In the 19th century, with the help of Pushkin and the Russian national school of composers, music spread abroad the glory of the national epos. Today it can be used to foster abroad a concept which is already axiomatic inside the Soviet Union, namely that no regime has done more to preserve and advance culture than the present one and that modern Soviet art is the legitimate heir to traditional Russian art and in no way inferior to it.

None the less, even in this sheltered and privileged corner of Soviet life, the path of the artist has not been an easy one, and it is only thanks to his natural genius, his devotion to his art, and his peculiar skill in finding a compromise between his own individualistic strivings and the ideological demands of the society in which he lives, that he has managed to preserve continuity with the great tradition of which he is the inheritor. A certain amount of 'give and take' has been necessary on both sides. The composer has had to submit to a measure of self-discipline. He has been required to abstain from excessive 'modernistic' experiments and to concentrate on themes of national and ideological importance, so that he is, albeit reluctantly, transformed into a potential Composer Laureate. In return the Party has tempered the wind to the shorn lamb by not insisting too rigidly on a literal application of Marxist principles to the sphere of music. A happy result of this understanding is that Soviet music has neither gone to seed nor bloomed in isolation. Even before the War, and much more since, Soviet musicians travelled widely and their experience has been enriched and their status at home enhanced by their rewarding contacts with the Western world.

SOVIET music had its growing pains in the twenties and suffered severe setbacks under the Zhdanov decrees of 1948, but it has survived as a native force and has suffered less from Marxist distortion than any other artform. There is no parallel to *Dr. Zhivago* in Russian musical history. Although *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* is no longer performed, Shostakovich is reported to be preparing a revised version of it. And in spite of all the strictures passed on Prokofiev's *War and Peace*, the

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opera did at last appear. Even if some of the so-called 'formalistic' works of these two outstanding composers remain still under a cloud, and are not performed, the composers themselves have been exonerated from blame and honourably rehabilitated. Today there is no Russian composer, past or present, whose works are not played and admired in the Soviet Union, except Stravinsky, and even some of his early works are given a hearing from time to time.

When the death of both Zhdanov and Stalin released fresh ideas about music, as about everything else, what problems confronted the Soviet composers and how are they solving them today? Their crying need is inspiration. The Party is always at hand to offer this, but the composer does not always feel the divine spark. Art evolves and the artist must advance. It is difficult for him not to stand still if he is cut off from the main stream of development in the world around him. According to Soviet thinking musical art attained its apogee with Tchaikovsky and 'The Mighty Handful', just as pictorial art did with the 'Itinerant' school in the Tretyakov Gallery. Everything composed or painted since bears the seeds of decay. The Russians honour the great composers of their national school on this side idolatry and no one will quarrel with them for that. Unfortunately, canonisation of the composers has gone hand in hand with canonisation of the tastes and prejudices of the age in which they lived, and this has a narrowing effect on Soviet musical life. It is not enough to say that young composers are discouraged from seeking inspiration in the work of twentieth century masters like Strauss, Bartok, and Stravinsky (not to speak of Schönberg, Berg, and Webern); they are not even offered the chance of hearing Wagner's Ring or Bruckner's symphonies. Instead they are given overdoses of Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov and Western romantics like Chopin, Schumann, Grieg and Liszt. In fact they are fed on the musical fare of their fathers and grandfathers before them and it is a very one-sided diet. Steering between the reefs of 'formalism' (trying to write like Stravinsky) and 'epigonism' (attempting to reproduce the sweeping melancholy lyricism of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov), young composers find it hard to establish an idiom which will be at once original, personal, and acceptable. 'Bold creative searching' is praiseworthy, but if the searching proves too bold, the composer finds himself on the rocks and denounced for formalism. Most of them try to follow the preachings of their masters and take refuge in folk-motives, but everyone knows how a composer's individuality and creative genius is cramped if he allows himself to be submerged by an excess of national melodies. The use of folk-motives requires exceptional skill and sense of proportion. As a great Soviet musician said some years ago when criticising the indiscriminate way in which some Stalin prizes had been awarded to composers for works which had no merit whatsoever: 'The mere evidence of folk-lore in the thematic material does not necessarily mean that the composition is genuinely national and shows mature craftsmanship'.

In these circumstances many of the younger composers seek their inspiration in the works of beloved Russian 'moderns' like Prokofiev and Shostakovich; but even this results in a good deal of in-breeding, since it is naturally the more orthodox rather than the more experimental works of these masters which they tend to take as models. Nor does it necessarily earn a composer a good mark to write like Shostakovich, as has been the experience of the youthful composer from Tomsk, Denisov, whose symphony was pleasantly spiked with the little angular and vivacious figures which Shostakovich loves to use. A critic soon detected that if the hands were the hands of Esau the voice was the voice of Dmitri!

There is no such thing as 'art for art's sake'. Soviet composers are not encouraged to write 'pure music', i.e. music without a label, of the kind Bach wrote in his concertos or Bartok in his quartets. Shostakovich may have written Preludes and Fugues on the model of Bach's 'Forty-Eight', but this would not be considered constructive in a young composer. Just as a Soviet painting must tell a story, so even a symphony or a quartet should have some sort of ideological theme. A Soviet critic once praised Shostakovich's Eleventh Symphony because he said it was 'saturated with working-class revolutionary songs' and was an 'assertion

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of the approaching victory of communism'. The Tenth Symphony, however, which at its first performance seemed to have no identifiable programme, was pronounced to be 'sombre'. Although each work is a masterpiece in its way, there is no doubt which of the two enjoys the greater official favour. It is the symphony with the label '1905'.

IT is axiomatic in the Soviet Union today that music must appeal to the masses and strengthen their faith in communism. With this in view the authorities are always pressing the composers to write operas, since a spectacle is always likely to draw bigger audiences than a concert work. Unfortunately the spectacular appeal of the modern opera suffers from the further official requirement that operas and ballets should not depict Tsars and enchantresses but events of contemporary life. Alas, too often the finished product, after heavy and prolonged birth-pangs, plays before empty houses, and after the first opening nights the director sends an enthusiastic report to the Ministry of Culture and puts the score on the shelf. But when the day of reckoning comes he does not escape a rebuke for having failed to keep in step with the demands of modern Soviet society. A difficult problem indeed, since Russian audiences are very conservative in their tastes and never seem to tire of seeing bearded boyars and tiaraed princesses on the stage. And how much easier it is to weave folk-motives into the story of Novgorod the Great than the building of the Kuibyshev dam! It is understandable that Shostakovich, who has so far resisted pressure to write another opera, is now engaged on composing an operetta!

None the less composers are free to write as they like and there is no censorship. It has sometimes happened that the Conservatoire has refused to accept students' work because of its formalism. In 1954 a minor stir was caused by three Moscow students, Ledenev, Chugaev, and Volkonsky. Ledenev, who held a diploma from the Moscow Conservatoire, submitted a pianoforte sonata as his graduating work. The director of the faculty felt impelled to forbid the public performance of the work because of its 'serious defects in style and ideology'. The octagenarian composer Glier publicly criticised all three of them. The interest in these cases lies in the fact that the young men had prepared their works under the benign aegis of some of the most distinguished composer-teachers of the day. We are now in 1959 and the talented Volkonsky is still composing controversial music. Writing of his Second String Quartet (recently discussed at the December Plenum of the Union of Soviet Composers), Kabalevsky found that the second movement 'exceeded the limit beyond which chaos begins and where the complexity of the artistic scheme degenerates into a sheer piling up of sounds'. A few years ago Karen Khachaturian, the young nephew of the eminent Armenian composer, wrote a symphony which the critics condemned as riddled with formalism. Shaporin (one of the composer-teachers referred to) defended Khachaturian in the Union of Soviet Composers, saying that he admired his talents and found much that was interesting and valuable in the first two movements of his symphony. The young composer received some publicity for this, but adverse publicity is not so advantageous in the Soviet Union as it sometimes is in the West.

The composer is free, but if he wants to make a living he must get his work performed. Shostakovich and Prokofiev could afford to take risks and make experiments which might not find favour because they had many successes to their credit and their reputation carried a great deal of weight. But the young composers must write a work which will either achieve popularity on its own merits or gain official recognition as something which the authorities think worth subsidising. The first step towards official recognition is to submit the manuscript to the appropriate section of the Union of Soviet Composers, where it will be discussed and criticised and where the composer may be advised to rewrite some portions of it. This process sounds horrifying to Western observers, who could with difficulty imagine Sir William Walton submitting the score of one of his new works to the Arts Council and cheerfully taking it home to rewrite it because someone had said it was out of touch with the demands of the time. But in Russia it is different. Even before the Revolution Russian composers were in the habit of submitting their

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manuscripts to the judgment of their fellow composers and critics before they finalised them, and docilely accepting correction from them. The members of the *Moguchaya Kuchka* discussed their scores with their leader Balakirev ('We obeyed him absolutely,' wrote Rimsky-Korsakov), and with the critic Stassov, while Rimsky-Korsakov took it upon himself to correct and improve upon Mussorgsky and Borodin. The idea of discussion in a collective is by no means so abhorrent to the Russian artist as one might think, but there is little doubt that it slows up and complicates the process of composition. Prokofiev had to revise his opera *War and Peace* four times, and Khachaturian took several years to steer his music to the ballet *Spartak* through the discussions in the Union. Generally an honourable compromise is reached and a finished work emerges. It would be a mistake to assume that discussions of this kind cannot be fruitful and rewarding or that the artists do not accept the criticisms as just. When Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony was being discussed in the Union the composer admitted quite frankly and sincerely that he had failed to write a proper *allegro* movement. He had never been able to manage it, he said, and had made the same mistake in his other symphonies.

SOVIET composers can now take part in discussions with composers from other countries. Soviet musicians tour all parts of the world and get the chance of hearing much music which they would not find in their concert repertoire at home. The public in its turn has heard orchestras, conductors, and artists from Britain, America and other countries, who have profited by the occasion to give the Soviet people their first hearings of many modern works. Strauss, Hindemith, Stravinsky, Walton, Britten and Bartok—to name only a few—have all been heard (though by no means the whole range of their works). The names of composers like Vaughan-Williams and Honegger are now mentioned in the same breath as Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, even if their music is still performed only on a very selective basis. (Here copyright problems come in also.) It can at least be said that the communist composers, such as there are, receive no privileged treatment in this respect. Although Alan Bush attended the Congress of Soviet Composers in 1957 and left it in no doubt of his political views, there has been no sign on the part of the Russians of any undue eagerness to perform his works.

Indeed, if concert and opera repertoires are still very conservative and limited by our standards, the range has become in recent years a much wider one. For one thing, the choice of works is no longer confined to the romantic school. A particularly welcome development has been the 'rediscovery' of Bach. This year the Riga choir sang the St. Matthew Passion and the Leningrad Academic Choir the B Minor Mass. Performances of the *Magnificat* and the Matthew Passion (again) are planned for next year. Some few years ago a chamber orchestra was founded by the viola player, Rudolf Barshai, which was dedicated to the study and performance of the works of Bach and his contemporaries and gives excellent concerts at Moscow. In the present season he is extending his repertoire to include Hindemith and Honegger. Professor Gedike, who died two years ago, will be greatly missed for his organ recitals of Bach, but he has many successful pupils and his organ at the Conservatoire (as well as several others in the country) is being enlarged and modernised.

Western music of the kind which had never been favoured under Stalin is gradually making its way into Russia. Last season the *Sinfonia Domestica* of Strauss and Hindemith's *Metamorphoses* were performed for the first time. Bartok and Janacek are becoming quite popular (mostly due to the visits of Hungarian and Czechoslovak and other foreign artists). All this may not sound very advanced, but it must be understood that there is no wide-spread demand for very modern music. Soviet taste has advanced some twenty years since Stalin died, but it would be a mistake to think that that rate of progress will be maintained. Russia's taste in music has always been conservative and when communist critics attack Schoenberg it would be an error to think that they are necessarily putting forward an unpopular reactionary view. The Soviet public would like to see more examples of modern painting from the West and learn more about

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the state of art there, if only to know exactly what is wrong with it. So much is clear from the letters which the editor of the Soviet journal *Art* receives. But they would probably be ready to take on trust that the 'Tone Row' is not for them. If the Party taboo were relaxed, it is doubtful whether there would be much active interest in very modern music, even among the most musical. Some of the more discriminating musicians feel none the less that the musical public should be given a chance of knowing what dodecaphonic music is, before final judgment is passed on it. From this point of view an article by an East German critic, translated by the Soviet conductor Anosov, which was recently published in *Soviet Music* and which did make some attempt to analyse the dodecaphonic system, was an advance on the stock way of dealing with this problem, which is to take out of their context remarks by various musicians of the past (such as Ysaye!) condemning modernism without providing any preliminary analysis of what the term really implies.

IF modern Western music is slowly securing a wider hearing in the Soviet Union today, what is the position with modern Soviet music? Some five years ago one often heard complaints that the state was not doing enough for the propagation of contemporary works. The works of new composers were seldom performed and it was even difficult to hear the works of established Soviet composers. A student of music found it hard to hear performances of works which were being talked about in the Conservatoire or written about in *Soviet Music*. (The selection of recorded music was very limited and records often unobtainable.) This was due to the general disorientation which prevailed in Soviet musical life after Zhdanov's ill-fated interventions. The importance of propagating Soviet music was appreciated, but most of the music which was being currently written was, when weighed up in the scales of Zhdanov, found to be wanting, and it was not considered healthy to propagate it. Zhdanov discouraged the composition of symphonies, chamber music, and song-cycles in their traditional forms. He tried to induce composers to go in for 'mass songs', oratorios (of a secular ideological kind), and operas (on contemporary themes). The authorities were then more preoccupied with the ideological aberrations of the Soviet intelligentsia than they were with Soviet prestige abroad. After the death of Stalin, when artists began to travel abroad in far greater numbers and music became a valuable diplomatic asset, it was realised that Soviet music could not begin to command respect abroad again unless it won laurels in the traditional forms and that an overdose of ideology would spoil the taste of the commodity for the foreign consumer. Moreover composers showed a certain reluctance to have their art forms dictated to them. As the Polish musical critic, Stefan Jarocinski, wrote in an article reproduced in *Soviet Music* in 1955, composers were being told: 'If your mass-songs do not succeed and people will not sing them, then write cantatas and programme music'. The Polish critic argued that though they had the right to demand from the artist that he should help the people in their struggle to build socialism, they exceeded their authority if they suggested to him not only his thematic material (i.e. folk-motives) but also the means of expressing it and the language in which he should clothe his ideas. There is no doubt that discussions on this important question influenced the party to modify its attitude and composers were encouraged to return to the traditional forms of composition. In a series of some dozen concerts which the Union of Soviet Composers organised in 1955 in connection with their Plenary Meeting, symphonic music took pride of place, and it was agreeable to find how much good music was being written by the younger composers such as Galynin, a pupil of Shostakovich, whose pianoforte concerto was performed; Shchedrin, a pupil of Shaporin, who himself executed his own pianoforte concerto; Boris Chaikovsky (Serenade), and others. Since then a great deal has been done to propagate contemporary symphonic works. In the present season in Moscow, for instance, it is planned to perform no fewer than one hundred symphonic works of Soviet composers, including works of the younger school. One uses advisedly the word 'planned' because in the Soviet musical world not all promises are fulfilled!

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But this brings the Soviet authorities face to face with a problem which is identical in all countries. As elsewhere, young and little known artists and composers perform before empty halls. Beethoven and Chopin, if performed by celebrities, will always fill them. The only Soviet composers who draw are Shostakovich and Prokofiev (who are incidentally the only two who are popular in the West, which only goes to show that, underneath, the musical pulse beats the same on either side of the Iron Curtain). But of the rich fund of music which these two composers have bestowed on a not too ungrateful people too little is performed even today. The Second, Third, and Fourth Symphonies of Shostakovich are never played and the Eighth and Ninth very rarely. His ballet and opera music are likewise left on the shelf. Soviet audiences are allowed to hear only a very limited selection of Prokofiev's works—of that great Sergei Sergeyevich, who is today almost canonised in Soviet musical circles. Yet Western gramophone companies have recorded a much wider range of his works than can be heard in his native land. It is of course the benign and romantic Prokofiev of *Romeo and Juliet, Peter the Wolf,* and the Seventh Symphony, rather than the spicy and mordant one of the Scythian Suite, the Fool, the Love of Three Oranges and some of the pianoforte concertos, who is presented to the people. It is likewise the Seventh Symphony of Shostakovich and his Cantata *The Sun shines on our Country* which is most often coupled with the composer's name in articles and speeches. But what if the artists were consulted and said that they agreed with this choice? Shostakovich does not seem to have accepted the verdict on the Eighth and Ninth Symphonies and in any case the public likes to make its own choice and posterity does not necessarily endorse an author's own judgments on his work.

NO one who has lived in the Soviet Union could come away without feeling that he had been among a people who are exceptionally gifted musically and where the regime does a great deal for the musicians, handling them now with greater tact and understanding, even if its Jehova-like paternalism would not be to every artist's taste. But one cannot conceal some disappointment at finding how little is done for the musical education of the masses, of which so much is written, and in particular for the forming of their tastes. In this classic country of planning there is a conspicuous absence of it in the musical sector, where musical programmes often appear to be put together in a haphazard and indeed somewhat amateur fashion. Perhaps one should regard this as one of the healthier features of Soviet musical life and express relief at finding so little direction. But, as in many other spheres of Soviet life, direction lives side by side with the lack of it, and to the outsider it sometimes appears as though the missionary zeal was misplaced. There is no doubt that countless opportunities are lost by the failure of the authorities to provide for properly planned repertoires in the concert seasons, designed to show music in its historic perspective or composers in their varying stages of development. Last year it was complained that Brahms' First Symphony was performed three times in the course of one season in Moscow and his Third and Fourth not at all. It was also mentioned that no attempt was made to present a cycle of all Beethoven's pianoforte sonatas or string quartets. Concert notes are totally inadequate for the general public, and worst of all, the main national newspapers advertise few of the concerts in advance and seldom comment on them afterwards, with the result that most of the population have no idea of who performed what, when, or how. Here the admirable *Soviet Music* steps into the breach, but it reports the concerts some two months after they took place, has in any case a very limited circulation among specialists, and can exercise little influence on the masses. The new fortnightly *Musical Life* should be quicker off the mark with musical information and be more accessible to the public, but it has not so far thought of providing a special column for concert reviews. It is also doubtful whether it will touch a much wider circle than *Soviet Music*, even though it is written in a more popular style.

If, in this particular respect, arrangements today fall far behind what was the practice in Tsarist times, we must not forget that the Soviet regime has done a great deal to develop musical

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life in the non-Russian parts of the Union, which lay pretty fallow before the revolution. Today the nationalities play a vital part in the musical life of modern Russia. Many of the best musicians come from the Republics: Khachaturian, Arutiunian, Taktakishvili, Kara Karaev, to name only a few. In the list of composers who were Stalin laureates in 1953 over half were non-Russian. It was the Riga Opera who came to Moscow to remind the Russians what a musical treasure they had in *The Invisible City of Kitezh*, Rimsky-Korsakov's great opera, hitherto put on the shelf because of its mystical Christian ideals. The Latvians gave Moscow an electrifying rendering of it and moved the audience deeply by their fine choral singing, an art to which the Russians are always peculiarly responsive. Now the Bolshoi are going to stage it themselves. It was a Riga choir which gave the first performance for a quarter of a century of the Matthew Passion. The Russians will follow their example next Easter. The inauguration of "decades", i.e. ten-day festivals in Moscow, held by opera and theatre companies from the Republics, has done much to encourage interest in music in the provinces.

Thanks to the more liberal attitude adopted to music in the last few years, and to the fruitful results of cross-fertilisation with the Republics and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and last but not least, thanks to the exchange of ideas and impressions with the West, Russian musical life is undergoing great changes and one can view its future with optimism.

Our Contributors

MARTIN ESSLIN, born in Hungary and educated in Vienna, is a journalist and broadcaster.

MAURICE FRIEDBERG teaches Russian language and literature at Hunter College, New York.

CAMILLA GRAY has been studying the movements in modern Russian art in the libraries of Moscow, London, Paris, New York, and Harvard. She is preparing a book on this subject.

RONALD HINGLEY teaches Russian literature at Oxford; he is the author of a study of Chekhov, and of *Up Jenkins*.

NAUM JASNY is an eminent authority on Soviet economics, and the author of many books on this subject.

GEORGE KATKOV studied philosophy in Prague, and is now a senior lecturer at St Antony's College, Oxford.

GEORGE LICHTHEIM was joint editor, with WALTER LAQUEUR, of *The Soviet Cultural Scene*, 1956-57.

CECIL PARROTT has recently returned from a three year tour of duty in Moscow where, as a keen music lover, he closely followed Soviet musical developments.

MORRIS WATNICK is working on a study of the problem of class consciousness at the Russian Research Centre of Harvard University.

PETER WILES is a fellow of New College, Oxford.

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The Genesis of Socialist—Realist Painting

FUTURISM – SUPREMATISM – CONSTRUCTIVISM

Camilla Gray

THE kaleidoscopic nature of this survey is a characteristic of the times it describes. From the outbreak of the Revolution in 1917, movement followed movement, 'ism,' 'ism.' Throughout the country, in the wake of these restless artists, institutions and papers sprang up and issued manifestoes which were as quickly superseded. Often artists would hold three or four posts in schools widely separated. Adding to the confusion is the sketchiness of the available material on this period, a period significant both in its political and artistic connotations. For purposes of simplification, the scope of this survey has been limited to the early formative period of Soviet painting (although developments in the other arts often coincided and pursued a closely parallel course), and to movements concentrated in Moscow and Petrograd.

The most significant period in the history of Soviet painting is from 1917-1932. This period divides into three main phases, echoing the phases of economic policy: war communism sees the 'dictatorship of the leftists'; the period of restoration, with the introduction of the New Economic Policy in 1921, is reflected in the growth of liberal competition (and reaction) in the arts, and the period of reconstruction, opening with the Five Year Plan in 1928, has its parallel in the tightening of Party control on art, and in the announcement in 1932 of the dogma of 'Socialist Realism.'

In pre-revolutionary Moscow and Petrograd, artistic trends were varied and numerous. 'The Wanderers,' a populist movement of the 1870's designed to bring art to the people, emphasised the moral and literary aspects of art in contrast to the esthetic; the 'World of Art,' founded in the 1890's, proclaimed the much-abused 'art for art's sake,' 'art for the élite,' while the 'Knave of Diamonds,' a group formed in 1910, consisted of painters strongly influenced by the work of Cézanne, most of whom had been 'World of Art' members. From this developed the futurist 'Donkey's Tail' and the 'Target' groups. These were active from 1912-1914 and were founded by the 'Rayonnist' Larionov. Finally come some of the most advanced abstract schools in Europe: that of Vladimir Tatlin and the Suprematists, whose most brilliant representative was Kasimir Malevich.

Since the turn of the century, the Russian artistic world had been undergoing a great renaissance. In close contact with the centres of European culture, there was a rapid development from 19th century romanticism, through impressionism, post-impressionism, 'art nouveau,' cubism, and a variety of other painting 'isms.' This extraordinary situation, whereby Moscow and Petrograd had developed from provincial backwaters to pioneers of the most advanced ideas, was much influenced by the outstanding collectors, Ivan Shchukin and Ivan Morosov. The collections of these two men, formed before 1914, are still considered among the finest collections in the world of French painting of the post-impressionist and early twentieth century schools. It is hardly surprising that the sudden influx of the most advanced European trends should have thrown the Russian artistic world into a frenzy of activity. Inspired by the great figure of Cézanne, by cubism, and by such national traditions as the *lubok*,[1] sign-painting, ikon painting—'ism' followed 'ism' in dizzy succession.

The Muscovite Kandinsky (who painted his first non-representational canvas in Munich in 1911) seems to have had curiously little influence on this Russian whirlpool; although his famous book *The Art of Spiritual Harmony*, published in Russia in 1912, was enthusiastically received, Kandinsky himself on his return to Moscow in 1915, seems to have made little contact with the

[1] Introduced into Russia in the 17th century, these were crude prints engraved on metal or wood; their themes were at first religious, and later covered folklore, satires and political caricatures.

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by then flourishing non-objectivist groups. The futurist Marinetti visited Russia in 1909 and had a tremendous reception, particularly among poets. By 1913 however, Russian futurism was well-established, both in painting and poetry, and, absorbed in its own noise, had no ears for the explosive prophet on his return. 'Futurist' among the hostile contemporary Russian art critics had become a term—mainly one of abuse—loosely grouping together all the most advanced movements fathered by cubism: the rayonnists, suprematists, followers of Tatlin, and all the other mushroom schools.

Like most of his contemporaries, Vladimir Tatlin had studied in Paris where he had been much impressed by Picasso, then engaged on his analytical cubist works, followed by metal and wood collages. On his return to Russia in 1913, Tatlin began to work on free suspended structures, planes built from wood, metal, glass and similar materials. Kasimir Malevich had likewise worked in Paris for a short while, about 1911-1912 (due to lack of documentation the dates given, particularly in relation to Malevich, are sometimes matters of conjecture). He then returned to Russia to make his historic statement in 1913, of the black square on the white ground. Around him formed the suprematist movement. 'From the black square, the barest minimum, I sought to free painting from the ballast of matter' (Kasimir Malevich, *Die gegenstandslose Welt*). 'The surface forming a square was the beginning of suprematism, of the new colour realism seen as non-object creation.' Economy was a basic principle; using simple geometric forms such as the square, the cross, and the circle, the suprematists studied the interrelation of form and rhythm, confining themselves mainly to pure elementary spectral colours. Although decried by insulted critics, these young artists were soon to be given a unique opportunity to prove their tremendous faith in the 'new vision.'

WITH the Revolution in 1917, the majority of the established artists left the country and with them many of the intelligentsia and critics who had supported them. The young 'futurists,' however, had nothing to lose by this great turnover. Under the Tsarist régime they had been penniless bohemians, outcasts of society; now the revolution proclaimed the building of a new world based on industrialisation, and they saw this as their great opportunity to become at last contributing members of society, bridging the gap between art and life. They took up the challenge and led the country-wide propaganda campaign, seeing in the promise of a new world the fulfilment of their great vision. 'Economics is the key to unity. By means of it, an individual personality is drawn into the sense of the general unity, becoming a lever in the system of communal activity. Thus the collectives are seen as a force binding people together, bringing the scattered individual into a world of unity of communal activity' (Malevich, *Iskusstvo*, Vitebsk, 1921, 1). They organised festivals and parades, clubs and reading centres for workers, remodelled art schools, and erected temporary memorials to revolutionary heroes; these were often realised in papier-maché or cardboard.

The political potential of art was a weapon on which the Bolsheviks seized during the period of war communism, and it was these 'futurist' or 'leftist' artists, as they came to be called, who leapt to their support. The Commissar of Education, A. V. Lunacharsky, a liberal and cultivated man with a Tolstoyan philosophy of art, proposed in 1918 that all artists should come under his Commissariat, known as Narkompros. Two departments were formed: the Department of Fine Arts and the Department of Museums and for the Preservation of Antiquities. A *Kollegia* was elected; David Shterenberg was appointed Chairman. This *Kollegia* tried to unite the 'right' as well as the 'left,' but the former made little response, and the 'dictatorship of the leftists' was established. They permeated all the artistic institutions as well as the art sections of Narkompros, and their enthusiasm and driving optimism soon made them the leading forces. The 'right' by contrast presented a bewildered front and did not revive until the introduction of NEP in 1921.

The Academy in Petrograd had been dissolved in 1918. Its school became an autonomous body and re-organised itself to form the Higher Artistic Institution. A short while later it developed into 'Svomas' (*Svobodnie Masterskie*) —Free Studios. This was a system whereby any

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student wishing to study could do so free of charge, requiring no diploma. They could choose with whom they wished to study among representatives of all schools—from the most conservative to Malevich or Tatlin. This experiment was soon discontinued; by 1921 the Academy had returned to its former methods and to a more or less normal academic life.

In Moscow, the Institute of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, and the Stroganovskii Institute had likewise been dissolved in 1918. In their place Higher Technical-artistic Schools were set up. They consisted of seven faculties, great emphasis being placed on technical training. The woodwork and metalwork faculties co-operated with the architectural in the equipment and arrangement of living quarters, the design of multi-purpose furniture, movable theatres, outdoor tribunes, kiosks, and so forth. The 'leftists,' that is the Suprematists, Constructivists (headed by Tatlin), and other non-objectivists, were the chief influence in these schools at this time, particularly in the technical faculties. Even at this early date there were signs of the future rift in this Leftist-Bolshevik marriage of opportunity; the charge was later to be made that these artists lived in a utopia, an already achieved communistic world, ignoring the intermediate stage of socialism. Art, it was argued, should be an instrument in the preparation of living, should be of use. As Lenin is said to have remarked to one of these 'leftist' artists at an exhibition of Suprematist works: 'What we need is firewood, not trees' (Mansurov, in an interview with the author).

AS yet, the Party's attitude remained one of vigilance, but of non-interference. The 'leftists' seemed to have been given the opportunity to realise their 'new vision'; they established in every branch of the arts and applied arts, a new order, a new pattern for living. But all too soon the dream was broken by demands that art should be an instrument in the building of socialism. The effort to meet these demands resulted in 1921 in a split among 'leftist' artists.

The discussions which culminated in this split took place in the Institute of Fine Arts, in Moscow. This Institute had been set up in May 1921. Vasili Kandinsky was the main influence in its organisation and the school's programme was laid down according to his theories. The Institute formed the nucleus of the Government Academy of Artistic Studies which was set up in 1921. It brought under its administration all the previously autonomous sections of Narkompros, including philosophical and sociological bodies, and also ran various experimental laboratories. The work of the Academy was of a theoretical nature, dictating and co-ordinating the programmes of the various artistic organisations throughout the country. It also arranged discussions, concerts, and exhibitions and controlled the publication of art literature. Kandinsky was appointed Director of the Academy's Department of Fine Arts, set up in 1922.

This rift in the Institute opposed Tatlin, Popova, Rodchenko and his wife Stepanova to artists such as Malevich, Gabo,[2] and Kandinsky. Tatlin believed that '. . . . the art of the future will be based on principles of construction . . . . real material in real space . . . . a synthesis of art, learning, and technical knowledge' (*Artists on art*, ed. R. Goldwater and M. Treves). The latter three artists were each in different ways opposed to Tatlin, but united in asserting that art was essentially spiritual and speculative and should not concern itself with social activities. Tatlin and his followers felt that they should devote their art to the people, and take an active part in the construction of the new society. They were supported by the futurist poet, Maiakovsky, and the critic, Nicolas Punin; Lunacharsky took no sides. The outcome was a victory for Tatlin, and Kandinsky left the Institute. (Shortly afterwards he left the country to work in the German Bauhaus.) The staff was reorganised to include Rodchenko and his wife Stepanova (Rodchenko had founded the 'Non-objectivist' movement in 1917), and a number of other prominent 'Leftists.' The school's new line was summed up in the word '*object*.'[3] But no sooner was this arrived at, than a counter-object movement

[2] Gabo had announced his 'Realist Manifesto,' together with his brother Pevsner, in 1920: 'We deny volume as an expression of space . . . . Depth is the unique form by which space can be expressed . . . .' This movement later became known as 'Constructivism.'

[3] See *Veshch/Gegenstand/Objet*, a Berlin periodical put out by El Lissitskii, Theo Van Doesburg, and Ilya Ehrenburg in 1922, inspired by ideas of this movement.

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arose, a reaction against 'pure' art in any form. 'Like the German Bauhaus, they had relegated easel painting to comparative unimportance because their aim is not to express their own personalities but to join with and shape a creative machine civilisation growing around them. In doing so they have accepted a social responsibility and become a social force. By accepting it they have gained . . . . freedom: freedom to participate in the adventure of human progress, freedom to move through the barriers of loneliness and isolation' (Samuel Cauman: *The Living Museum*). 'Art is taken over from the field of speculative activity (pictures) into the field of practical construction' (A. Gan, *Constructivist Manifesto*, 1921).

Thus arose the Constructivist movement which, together with Suprematism, form Russia's main contribution to the history of the modern movement.

'Constructivism is the organisation of the given material on the principles of tectonics (the science or art by which implements, vessels, buildings, etc., are made, both in relation to their use and to their artistic design), structure and construction, the form becoming defined in the process of creation by the utilitarian aim of the object' (*Lef*, 1923). Constructivism is seen as a step towards the idea of production-art. The elaboration of this idea in relation to Marxist ethics produced a crisis in the life of the Institute, and marked a decided break with its previous direction.

The Institute, now merged with the Academy, and also working in close contact with the Higher Technical-artistic Schools, known as Vkhutemas, had become a united 'left front' association based on production; the majority of the Professors taught in both the Institute and the Vkhutemas. Propaganda became a major activity: a first move was to establish contacts with and receive commissions from production centres—in Petrograd, for example, Tatlin set up a technical-production laboratory in the metallurgical factory 'Novy Lesner.' He later tried to set up a branch of the Institute in Petrograd with the young Suprematist artist, Mansurov, but was frustrated by the growing financial crisis.

APART from the organs of Narkompros, a most active force in the cultural field at this time was the revived pre-revolutionary organisation for Proletarian Culture and Education, known as the Proletcult. The chief theorist of this organisation was Bogdanov; before the 1917 Revolution, he and Lunacharsky had worked together in the Social Democratic Party, although Bogdanov was from the beginning at odds with Lenin—a fact which later spelt his downfall.

The theory and programme of the organisation were laid down by Bogdanov at the 'First All-Russian Conference of Proletcults' in Moscow in September 1918. 'Art organises social experience by means of living images, not only in the realm of cognition, but also in that of feeling and desires. It is consequently a most powerful weapon for the organisation of collective forces, and in a class society, of class forces' (*Protokoll: Pervaya Vserossiiskaya konferentsiya proletarskikh kulturno-prosvetitelnikh organizatsii*, ed. Lebedev-Polonskii). The autonomy of the Proletcult was emphasised, as derived from the theory of the three independent ways to socialism, the political, economic, and cultural. This theory was anathema to Lenin.

The organisation soon met with active opposition on the part of the Bolsheviks. Three prominent Party theoreticians were for different reasons opposed to Bogdanov: Trotsky held that proletarian culture was an impossibility (see his *Literatura i Revoliutsiya*); Bukharin doubted whether it could be artificially induced, independent of the Party and State, and Lenin had always been opposed to Bogdanov. The outcome was a resolution passed by the Proletcult Council in 1920, saying that proletarian culture could only arise on a basis of 'bourgeois' thought and culture which already existed, and that the Proletcult must function as a subordinate body to Narkompros. Nonetheless, the idea of a separate proletarian culture persisted into the thirties (see E. J. Brown, *The Proletarian Episode in Russian Literature*, 1928-1932).

In the first years of the Revolution, financial support for artists was reduced to the simple provision of lodging and *paiki*, food ration cards. However, in 1918, a Government Fund and All-Russian Purchasing Commission had been set up. This was a scheme to provide funds for museums (during the period 1919-1920, thirty provincial museums were organised) and to

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acquire works of art of all schools, including the non-representational schools—yet another way in which the 'new order' permeated the whole country. The Director of the Museum Bureau was Rodchenko. This Purchasing Fund was dissolved after three years with the introduction of NEP, being replaced by 'free supply and demand' (Tugenhold, *Zhivopis revoliutsionnovo desyatiletiya*, 1918-1928).

The introduction of the New Economic Policy brought a new look in the artistic field. The country was tired and hungry, and in no mood to be exhorted; the need for relaxation, for a breathing space in which to orientate themselves, was the dominant feeling among the people. With the partial revival of the old economic pattern, Government art patronage was exchanged for that of the new bourgeoisie. The law of supply and demand again came into force. Fees were re-introduced, many schools and institutions forced to close. Financial straits provoked an effort to unite industry with artistic institutions. It was also seen by the Constructivists as a matter of philosophical necessity in the development of production-art. In 1921, Pletnev (a follower of Bogdanov, one of the chief theorists of the Proletcult) urged the Proletcult and trade unions to work out a basis for practical co-ordination of forces, adopting the Proletcult method of working. This was an effort to free the Proletcult from the authority of Narkompros, and illustrated the persistence of Bogdanov's theories on the essential autonomy of cultural organisations. In spite of these measures to unite art with production, many Proletcult studios were closed in 1922 for financial reasons. In the general re-organisation, all 'painting' studios were closed and reformed for production-art.

THE changes introduced by NEP were reflected in art by the return to life of such groups as the 'Wanderers' who held their 47th Exhibition in 1922; a poor affair from the artistic point of view, but an event which provoked an historically important discussion. It gave voice to the hitherto passive pre-revolutionary groups, the 'rightists,' defenders of 'realism.' Out of this discussion grew the 'Association of Painters of Revolutionary Russia' (Akhrr), in whose 'heroic realism one can detect the embryo of Socialist Realism.'

Akhrr was formed as an autonomous body under the Moscow Academy of Artistic Studies, in 1922. It formulated its approach thus: 'We reflect daily life: the life of the Red Army, the workers, the peasants, the revolutionary workers and heroes of work. Ours is a style of "Heroic Realism" in monumental form' (*Chetyre goda Akhrra*).

At first small and insignificant, it grew rapidly, financially bolstered in 1923 by a commission from the Red Army for their 'Fifth Anniversary Exhibition.' This exhibition, a history of the Revolution in painting, later formed the nucleus of the Museum of the Revolution, whose creation provided Akhrr with a much-envied means of livelihood. Little emphasis was placed on artistic standards. What was wanted was a rapid and clear record of the recent stirring events; the subject matter provoked an emotional response which blurred any critical æsthetic approach, and a convenient mask for poor art was thus provided. The glaring technical and artistic inadequacy of these works can be ascribed to the number of provincial artists who had found their way to the Akhrr shelter, and also to war conditions, in which poster propaganda work and shortage of painting materials had led to a rapid deterioration of technical standards.

Akhrr's slogan was 'Content will form its own style!' This was in diametrical opposition to the Constructivists, and their irreconcilability lies at the core of the struggle in the artistic field which was to result in the eventual triumph of Socialist Realism.

The return to the *kartinka*—little picture—was explained by the 'rightists' as a sign of disillusionment in the 'leftists.' The latter attributed it to counter-revolutionary tendencies. Certainly this return to subject-painting was a widespread reaction to the previous virtual monopoly of the abstract schools. The formation of Akhrr was simply an obvious example of this trend. The falling star of the 'leftists' is seen as a counterpart of the desire for immediate results, a demand for the reflection of the 'new society,' the positive gains of the Revolution.

The Moscow Vkhutemas give an idea of the artistic field under NEP. Three schools vied with

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each other for control: the 'purists,' the conventional academicians, and those like Malevich and Gabo, who were opposed to the Constructivists' idea that art was dead, useless, an anachronism, and who held that, in becoming useful, art ceases to be, and that furthermore, without art, the applied arts would necessarily cease to exist. The applied arts group were of the William Morris school of thought, and tried to revive the national crafts. Lastly, there were the Constructivists. They worked exclusively in technical faculties, approaching the technical mastery of materials functionally, working on designs for book covers, multi-purpose furniture, cinema titles of an experimental nature, photomontage, and so on. They were particularly engrossed with investigating motion as an æsthetic factor—an outcome of futuristic ideas; an example of this was Tatlin's tower, with its three glass cones rotating at different speeds on a slanting axis; a monument similar in feeling to the Eiffel tower, '. . . . a contemporary realisation of the urge toward the interpenetration of inner and outer space' (S. Giedion: *Space, Time, and Architecture*). Such experiments were condemned by the 'purist' Gabo: 'Such art is not pure construction art but only imitation of the machine.'

THE Institute of Fine Arts had provided the theoretical programme of the Vkhutemas during their 'leftist dictatorship,' and in 1923, its members issued a statement (in the magazine *Lef*) stating that the Vkhutemas had become entirely 'purist,' that the production faculties were empty, and the machines, perforce, sold. They recommended a complete re-organisation for the revival of the production faculties: but the day of the 'leftist dictatorship' was on the wane. In December 1923 a 'Studio Revolution' was announced by the Party cell in the Vkhutemas. The Party cell consisted of 'rightist' artists, with a remarkably 'unpainterly' approach—as the 'leftists' pointed out by way of retort to their attacks: 'Nothing but old cud. Show us your untendentional, unthematical, class-less culture about which you so sweetly warble even in the Soviet press . . . . What are you teaching? That is the point in question' (*Lef*, 1923). But all esthetic criticism was dismissed with the plea of 'class-warfare.'

A crisis was reached in 1924 with the 'Discussion Exhibition.' This was a show of all major current trends, and for the first time publicly juxtaposed the 'leftists' and 'rightists.' The Constructivists exhibited models for workers halls and Kominterns, typographical designs, designs for electric fittings, designs for working clothes; illustrations and designs for children's books (such as the enchanting 'Suprematist Story of Two Squares' by El Lissitskii, the brilliant typographical designer). Their attempts to rationalise art led naturally to architecture, but owing to the lack of materials at this time, the great projects were mainly confined to paper. The actual attainments of these ambitious artists, as demonstrated in the Exhibition, were considered rather modest beside their boast of art permeating life, organising it according to the 'new vision.' From this time onwards, the prestige of the Constructivists is seen to diminish. Condemned as utopians, they were gradually made to feel outcasts of society once more. Their great contribution to the Revolution forgotten, they were condemned as useless bourgeois, alien to the new society. 'Heroic Realism' gradually replaced 'Constructivism' as the 'new revolutionary art,' and was encouraged by a large subsidy to Akhrr from the Government in 1925 (Fedorov-Davidov, *Pechat i Revoliutsiya*, 1926).

An important event at this 'Discussion Exhibition' was the appearance of the future 'Group of Easel Painters' (OST); they represented the first graduates of the Vkhutemas, the first generation of Soviet painters. In their manifesto, these young artists proclaimed a middle way; among the leftists, they said, art had been swallowed up by production. 'However, profiting by their formal discoveries, we assert the right of painting to exist, and subject painting to boot' (Tugenhold, *Zhivopis revoliutsionnovo desyatiletiya*, 1918-1928). They laid stress on urban life, machines, industrialisation. Preoccupied with technique, they also idealised physical culture, sports, the circus, the new 'Russian American in a leather jacket.' Most of them had studied under the brilliant graphic artist Favorski, to whom can be traced the marked influence of ikon painting. Other strong influences on this generation from the Vkhutemas were German Expressionism (there

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was a big German Expressionist exhibition in Russia in 1924) and photomontage techniques. Most significantly, however, the 'discussion exhibition' marks the strong tendency of the younger artists towards subject painting, away from the ideals of the Constructivists.

By 1925 the quarrels in the cultural field had reached such an impasse that the Party was was forced to interfere, to establish a Party policy in cultural affairs—a precedent of tragic consequence, although this resolution was liberal in comparison with later ones. It was chiefly the work of Bukharin and declared that the Party could not as yet recognise any group as being the official representative of the proletariat—although, significantly, it assumed such a future hegemony. The 'fellow-travellers' were commended as indispensable allies and legitimate members of Soviet society; the Proletarians were mildly encouraged to get on with the job of writing proletarian literature, without any very clear indication of what the word meant. Altogether the resolution was a somewhat nebulous indication for artists looking desperately for a solution to their problems, notably the problem of the concrete programme for artists under the Soviet Government. This remained a subject of bitter dispute until the unfortunate dogma of 'Socialist Realism' put an end to polemics, while failing to provide a valid artistic solution.

Akhrr, little damped by the Party's pronouncement that many groups should be allowed to co-exist, continued its class-warfare as the only legitimate exponent of proletarian art. Being the only group with a secure financial backing, their work naturally favoured by the 'new bourgeoisie,' they continued to flourish.

But with the Party's 'liberal' attitude a large number of groups sprang up. Among the most important were 'OST,' now a flourishing movement, 'Buitio,' and the 'Moscow painters.' 'Buitio' was the pre-revolutionary 'Knave of Diamonds' group, some of whose members had left to form still another group, the 'Makovets,' in concert with a number of Vkhutema graduates. In contrast to 'Makovets,' the 'Moscow painters' had a very graphic style; their works, to quote a contemporary critic, '. . . . were full of the beauty of things, colour run wild, without philosophical ideas. It was all one *what* they painted; everything was approached superficially, statically, without organisation. Temperament was shown in the splash of a brush, but not in the capacity to select, to concentrate the elements of a picture' (Tugenhold, *op. cit.*). The change in outlook of these artists from the 'Knave of Diamonds' Westernism to the new Slavophilism is indicative of the new Soviet intelligentsia. In contrast to the subjective immediacy of their approach, the 'Makovets' group was conscious and controlled to the extent of 'unpainterliness.' They included the most cultivated painters; perhaps as a result, their work was inclined to be eclectic and tired.

WITH the introduction of the Five Year Plan in 1928, Government policy became more pronounced and active in the cultural field, and was accompanied by a reversion to the pre-NEP policies, a concentration of energies under one leadership. Art was no longer to be supported by haphazard and unauthorised commissions; instead there was to be a Kollegia in the Narkompros Department of Fine Arts (similar to that which had existed from 1918-1922). This change in the Party's policy in regard to the Fine Arts was announced though not yet formulated. The next few years were taken up with endless discussions, as in the early days of the Revolution, for although the circumstances were by now very different, the basic problems had remained unsolved.

By now, Akhrr had become a firmly established and flourishing organisation, containing many Party members, with a network of branches throughout the country, controlled from the centre. Many of the former artistic groups had joined its ranks, often for financial reasons, for Akhrr had been receiving a substantial Government subsidy since 1925, whereas most other groups were without any kind of financial support, 'The Moscow Painters,' 'Makovets,' and Igor Grabar as a representative of the former 'World of Art' group, had all joined up with the 'Association of Moscow Painters' (OMKh). 'Rost,' a group formed in 1928 largely of Vkhutema graduates, declared: 'We admit that the contemporary artist should not objectively "reflect," but actively transform, the organisation of life, the tasks of socialist construction—the psyche of the new man. However, each one of us is working independently, cut off from any contact with the masses . . . . we do not know and do not

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sense for whom we are working' (I. Matsa, *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo za* 15 *let*). They decided to work as 'New Wanderers' in the clubs, travelling from one exhibition to another, thus coming in contact with the masses and discovering their reactions. A similar group was the 'Association of Artistic Communal Workers' (*Obshchestvo Khudozhnikov-Obshchestvennikov*). They hoped that by working on the suggestions of the people, by demanding an active participation of the spectators and holding discussions at exhibitions, they would be carrying out the Leninist slogan: Art to the people! 'The relentless animosity of Stalin's régime to formal experimentation derives much of its orthodox justification from these two Leninist theses: the obligatory "narodnost" of art—"Art belongs to the people . . . . it must unite the feelings, thoughts and will of these masses, elevate them"; and secondly the banishment of innovation for its own sake' (Robert M. Hankin: 'Soviet Literary Controls,' in *Continuity and Change in Russian and Soviet Thought*, ed. E. J. Simmons). However, owing to lack of financial backing, these artists, like so many other small groups, found themselves in a very bad way. They were all at daggers drawn with Akhrr. A particularly active opposition to Akhrr was presented by the group 'Oktyabr,' whose members had all previously worked in the Institute of Fine Arts, and had logically gone on to work in the field of architecture, planning, and mass-production. Architecture was still a stronghold of constructivist functional principles, much influenced by contemporary European and American schools.

This desire among many sincere artists, to be united with the workers and to produce an art which would be integral with the new society, was consistently frustrated by the Party. Although denying the old bourgeois 'art for art's sake,' 'art for the élite,' it had created a new 'ivory tower' for artists. The need to establish the missing balance between emotional, intellectual, and social existence was considered an anachronism, no longer valid in a socialist society. What then was to be the Soviet artist's point of departure, isolated from the masses, useless as an individual?

The brewing storm broke with Akhrr's Tenth Exhibition, dedicated to the tenth anniversary of the Red Army, in 1928. This had been announced as a united group exhibition, but was almost entirely monopolised by Akhrr. Nevertheless, Akhrr was disturbed by this effort to break their monopoly in 'official art'; the glaring disparity between their claim to represent the flower of the new revolutionary art and the poor, far from revolutionary works they exhibited —resembling nothing so much as poor imitations of the 19th century 'Wanderers'—provoked howls of protest. But these quarrels were no longer allowed to remain an internal affair for the artists, as in the pro-NEP period, for with the promulgation of a Cultural Five Year Plan in 1930, the Government was beginning to evolve an official philosophy in art, backed by a new system of control and centralisation. The Narkompros Department of Fine Arts demanded that all artistic groups should purge their ranks of bourgeois and dubious ideological elements, and recommended various more or less drastic individual changes among them, 'suggesting' that some groups should dissolve, and others reform themselves radically. At a meeting in November-December 1930, Narkompros Art Section, consisting of 13 Moscow art groups, resolved to form a 'Federatsia,' an 'Association of Workers in the Fine Arts,' to unite all those groups which Narkompros had 'approved' earlier, and demanded the complete re-organisation of the existing system of artistic groups, which had 'been formed on formalistic and not ideological bases' (Matsa, *op. cit.*). The Government organisation in Moscow for the country-wide administration of exhibitions and the central artistic-educational organ *Khudozhnik* were to be the basis of the new Fine Arts Department. Akhrr, Oktyabr, and Rapkh (Association of Proletarian Artists, paralleling the literary group, Rapp) emerged from this re-organisation as the only surviving groups.

In 1932 a Party directive 'On the re-organisation of all existing literary and artistic groups and the formation of a single Union of Soviet Artists' (*Pravda*, 23 April 1932) was designed 'to unite all those who support the Soviet régime and are striving to take part in the building of socialism.' Akhrr, and all that it represented, had won. Socialist realism, undefined, was established as dogma.

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BERT BRECHT: THE LAST YEARS*

Martin Esslin

WHEN Brecht returned to East Berlin in 1948 he was well aware of the duality, the truly Hegelian contradiction, between his own ideals of communism and the realities of life in a communist country. In the thirties he had watched the fight against the avant-gardists of the Soviet theatre and seen the acceptance of the Stanislavsky method as the official style of acting in the Soviet Union. In his earlier theoretical writings he had never concealed his opinion of Stanislavsky's theatre as the antithesis of what a truly Marxist theatre should be. Nevertheless he had paid his tribute to the newly adopted formula of 'socialist realism.' But it had been a typically double-edged Brechtian tribute: in an essay on the 'Range and Variety of the Realist Style' (1938), Brecht used Shelley's 'Mask of Anarchy' as an example of realism—*i.e.* of a progressive political tendency—which was nevertheless clothed in the form of fantasy. From it he had drawn the conclusion: '. . . . we see . . . . that realism is not a matter of form. Nothing is so bad in putting up models as to put up *too few models*. It is dangerous to tie the great concept of realism to a few names, and to gather together a few forms as examples of the only true creative method, however useful these forms themselves may be . . . . The truth can be concealed in many ways. It can be said in many ways . . . .'[1]

A few months later Brecht felt that he ought to come out more clearly against 'formalism,' but here again he kept his obeisance to the anti-formalist campaign then raging in the Soviet Union carefully balanced: 'The very salutary campaign against formalism has helped the productive development of artistic forms, by proving that social content is an absolutely decisive condition for such development. Any formal innovation which does not serve and derive its justification from its social content will remain utterly fruitless.'[2] Which means that Brecht, while acknowledging the demand for social content (which he had never denied) insisted on his right to continue his experiments with form.

BRECHT never concealed his contempt for the artistic standards of Stalinist Russia. Shortly after his return to East Berlin he created considerable embarrassment among a group of German actors in the Soviet-run artists' club 'Die Moewe' by declaring in a loud voice that he considered the performances of Soviet drama he had seen as downright *Kitsch*. And when he advised the Swiss journalist Gody Suter to read Soviet novels, he praised their social attitude but added 'As to quality—rather like Gerstaecker or Kellermann'[3]—both authors of highly popular novels whose names are synonymous with *Kitsch* among most German left-wing intellectuals. And when he went to Moscow in 1955 to receive the Stalin Peace Prize and was taken to see current Soviet performances, he told the Soviet critic Fradkin that the performances he had liked best were those of Mayakovsky's *The Bug* and *The Baths* at the Satirical Theatre. Both of these plays had been banned since the middle thirties, because they are savage and grotesque satires on Soviet bureaucracy. Fradkin adds that Brecht told him he considered the actor Yachnitski a perfect exponent of the epic style, because he left no doubt about the difference between his own personality and that of the character he portrayed.[4] A typically Brechtian way of expressing his contempt for the Stanislavsky method and the official style of the Stalinist era!

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* This article is extracted from a full-length study of Brecht by Mr. Esslin to be published shortly by Eyre and Spottiswoode.

[1] Brecht: Weite und Vielhaft der realistischen Schreibweise, Versuche 13, p. 107.

[2] Ueber Reimlose Lyrik mit Unregelmaessigen Rhythmen, Versuche 12, p. 147.

[3] Gody Suter, 'Brecht': *Tagesanzeiger* (Zürich), 1 September 1956.

[4] I. Fradkin, 'Bertolt Brecht'; *Teatr* (Moscow), January 1956.

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Brecht's first post-war visit to East Berlin had been preceded by a performance of *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* (The Private Life of the Master Race) at the Deutsches Theater, in January 1948. One of the party's main spokesmen in the field of theatrical criticism, Fritz Erpenbeck, had greeted this sequence of relatively un-Brechtian scenes with cries of joy that Brecht had at last abandoned his 'false theory of the epic theatre and the "didactic play,"' whose advocacy his friends had considered a tragic aberration in so talented an artist.[5] So it must have been clear to Brecht that he was in for a hard struggle.

The East German authorities not only regarded the winning over of such a famous playwright as a major propaganda victory vis-à-vis the West; they also made a sincere attempt to win him over to their own point of view about art. They spared no expense to give him what he wanted, and argued with him, patiently and at great length. Much of this went on behind closed doors, but sometimes it was found necessary to bring these arguments into the open. In the case of *Mother Courage*, for example, the text has been published of a discussion which Brecht had with the party's favourite playwright Friedrich Wolff (author of the well-known anti-Nazi play *Professor Mamlock*). Wolff very politely reproached Brecht with leaving the audience to draw its own conclusions from Mother Courage's fate. 'How can we incite our people to overcome that fatalistic attitude towards a new war?' Wolff asked, and added 'I should have thought Courage *even more* effective if her words "Cursed be war!" had found a visible expression in action, if she had drawn the consequences from her experience.' In other words, the party would have liked Mother Courage to have been converted to an active political attitude at the end of the play, instead of continuing her old life as a victualler. Brecht's retort was: 'If Courage learns nothing, I think the public can learn something by watching her.'[6]

From its own point of view the party was right: the East Berlin public regarded *Mother Courage* as a faithful picture of the horrors of war, including those of the Russian occupation. The brilliantly sarcastic things that are said in *Mother Courage* about great generals and field-marshals who bask in glory at the expense of the poor devils in the mud apply to the great Marshal Stalin with the same force as to Field Marshal Tilly or King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden.

But if Brecht was prepared for, and unperturbed by, this kind of criticism, the matter became more serious when his most openly communist play, *The Mother*, was the target for similar criticism. This was a magnificent production. Helene Weigel gave a great performance and Caspar Neher had designed some highly effective sets. It looked like a great success. But a few weeks after the first night the Central Committee of the party launched a massive attack against it. At the fifth plenary meeting of the Central Committee in March 1951, one of the highest members of the hierarchy, Oelssner, asked: 'Is this in fact realism? Are these typical figures shown in typical surroundings? . . . In my opinion this is not theatre. It is a kind of mixture between Meyerhold and Proletkult. If a man as talented as Brecht could write a play that really hangs together, that is really composed, what a work of art we could get! Besides . . . . there are scenes that are historically wrong and politically harmful.'[7] Here Brecht was bluntly asked to abandon his very own epic style. The mention of Meyerhold was ominous in view of what had happened to that unfortunate producer of genius. Another high party official, Hans Rodenberg, also reproached Brecht for holding wrong views of Marxism, but asked that he should be reprieved: 'Of course, we must give him more time . . . . Brecht is using up his old luggage at the moment . . . . he needs time to find his feet . . . . Provided he had felt able to do so, he would surely by now have written a play about our own time. Our real criticism of Brecht will depend on the time it takes him to write this play and what a play it will be! . . . We must give Brecht some time. We must not stop criticising him, but we

[5] F. Erpenbeck, *Lebendiges Theater* (Berlin, 1949), p. 281.

[6] *Theaterarbeit*, p. 255.

[7] Quoted in Ruehle, *Das gefesselte Theater* (Cologne/Berlin, 1957), p. 238ff.

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must criticise him as intelligently as he himself is intelligent.'[8]

So Brecht was given a reprieve to allow him to write a play on a contemporary East German problem. He never wrote such a play and continued, to the day of his death, to produce his earlier works—the luggage he had brought with him from his exile.

ONE of these earlier works was *The Trial of Lucullus*, which caused the most widely publicised of Brecht's clashes with the authorities.

The Trial of Lucullus had been written in 1939 as a radio play and had been broadcast by a Swiss station. It shows the burial of Lucullus, the great Roman general and conqueror, and his descent into the nether world, where he has to appear before a jury of shades. *The Trial of Lucullus* is thus a straightforward, and very moving, poem on the futility of military glory and conquest, as it appears *sub specie aeternitatis*. Stravinsky is said to have been interested at one time in setting it to music; Roger Sessions based an opera on the English version; but it was Paul Dessau, whom Brecht had met in the United States and who had also gone back to East Berlin, who wrote the music for the opera, which was to be performed for the first time by the East Berlin State Opera on 17 March, 1951.

This was the period of the Korean war, and the communist authorities were clearly perturbed when they heard that the new work was a condemnation of all war as folly and showed the futility of conquest, a sentiment that might have been appropriate when it referred to Hitler, but could scarcely appear very politic in the centre of Soviet-occupied Germany. The story goes that the communist authorities wanted to stop the performance altogether, but because a great deal of money had already been spent on the production, because a famous conductor, Hermann Scherchen, had been invited from the West, and the first performance of so important a work had been widely publicised, they decided to permit three performances before a strictly controlled, hand-picked audience of party stalwarts and members of the youth organisation.

These young people, however, were not very interested in opera and many of them sold their tickets to Brecht enthusiasts and intellectuals from East and West Berlin. As a result the plan misfired: instead of giving the new opera the planned cool reception which would have allowed the production to have been withdrawn as unsuccessful, the first night audience received it with tremendous—and demonstrative—applause and cheers. The members of the East German government who had watched the performance with growing consternation, left in a huff and the two remaining performances that had already been billed were cancelled.

On 22 March the party organ *Neues Deutschland* fired a massive broadside against Brecht and his composer Paul Dessau. In an article headed 'The Trial of Lucullus—the Failure of an Experiment of the German State Opera,' the two were taken to task for having produced a work which 'does not correspond to reality. The world peace camp with its 800 million people, led by the Soviet Union, is not a court of shades, but has the very real power to subject all war criminals to a very earthbound kind of justice. What at the beginning of Hitler's war might have been understood as the expression of the uncertain political position of an exiled anti-fascist writer, appears as a relapse into doubt and weakness which the poet should have overcome long ago when it is by the very manner of its staging put forward as an authoritative comment on the current situation.'

The composer Paul Dessau was accused of cheap cabaret effects. A Western paper had compared his music to that of Stravinsky. And 'Igor Stravinsky, a composer who lives in the USA, is a fanatical destroyer of the European musical tradition. Anyone who follows such an example destroys his own talent. Dessau robs himself of the possibility of arousing the enthusiasm of the masses against a new war of conquest. A music that pours dissonances and intellectualist cleverness over its listeners confirms the reactionary part of the audience in its attitudes, and repels the progressive section . . . .'[9]

The fury of this attack on the music of *The*

[8] ibid.

[9] *Neues Deutschland*. East Berlin, 22 March 1951.

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Trial of Lucullus is reminiscent of the Nazis' campaign against 'decadent' music. In a later article in the party organ, directed this time mainly against the management of the State Opera, the attack was driven home even more forcefully: 'Take the *Trial of Lucullus*, and look at the composition of the orchestra for this work. There are no violins. This most noble of all instruments, which can produce the most beautiful tonal patterns, is missing. Instead there is a piano doctored with drawing pins and nine different kinds of percussion instruments, among them drums, large and small, and metal sheets that are banged with stones . . . .'[10]

Brecht and Dessau were summoned to a discussion with the party leaders, which is reported to have lasted eight hours. When Brecht emerged from this marathon he said, with his usual ambiguity: 'Where else in the world can you find a government that shows such interest in, and pays such attention to artists?'[11]

But he tackled the re-writing of the text with the good grace of a craftsman who puts in alterations according to the wishes and tastes of his employers. Yet on closer scrutiny these alterations do not amount to much: some passages were omitted for obvious reasons—for example:

> . . . . they say, they are recruiting legionaries in the taverns by the Tiber, for the war against the West which is to be conquered . . . .[12]

Other passages were inserted to make a distinction between a war of conquest and one of national defence. The shades of Roman soldiers are now made to exclaim:

> If only we had ceased serving the aggressor!
> If only we had joined the defenders![13]

The title was changed from the excessively objective *Trial of Lucullus* to the more clear-cut *Condemnation of Lucullus*. Dessau revised the music and replaced some of the *Sprechgesang* with arias that might have come from traditional grand opera.

To forestall any criticism that a trial by the shades of the departed was too unrealistic, at the first performance of the revised version on 12 October, 1951 an inscription in large letters announced that 'the verdict of the court of the dead differs in no way from that of posterity.'[14]

But in spite of all these precautions the reception of the *Condemnation of Lucullus* by the official party organ *Neues Deutschland* was decidedly cool: 'It must be stated that the new version represents a distinct improvement on the original shape of the work, as a number of weaknesses have been eliminated. Nevertheless it must not be overlooked that it still lacks the real dramatic tension that would compel the spectator to participate and take sides. This is due to the fact that the defeat and annihilation of the conqueror takes place not in living reality, not as part of the real struggle of the progressive forces of the nations against their bloodsuckers but, as it were, posthumously, in the kingdom of the dead . . . . This brings the whole conception dangerously near to symbolism . . . .'[15] The music too, in spite of Dessau's changes, received a severe rebuke. After a few performances *The Condemnation of Lucullus* also disappeared from the stage of the State Opera. It reappeared in the East German repertory only after Brecht's death.

Shortly after the failure of the revised version to win the favour of the East German authorities, Brecht gave permission for *Lucullus* to be performed in Western Germany, in the original unrevised version and under its original title. And at the same time he published the text of the opera in the eleventh issue of his *Versuche*—also in the original form, with the alterations merely given in an appendix.

FRIENDS who met Brecht at the time of the controversy about *Lucullus* unanimously report that he took to it like a duck to water and seemed to enjoy it all tremendously. He cheerfully entered into the intentions of the authorities, gladly admitted his political mistakes—and yet, at the same time, he did not

[10] *Neues Deutschland*, quoted in *Deutsche Zeitung*, 10 January 1953.

[11] Ruehle, *Das gefesselte Theater*, p. 243.

[12] Brecht, *Das Verhoer des Lukullus*, Scene 12. Versuche 11, p. 150.

[13] *ibid.*, p. 159.

[14] *National Zeitung* (East Berlin), 19 October 1951.

[15] *Neues Deutschland*, 19 October 1951.

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make any really important changes, certainly none that altered the character of the work as a whole. The essential features that had been singled out as formalistic remained intact. The decision to publish both versions, and the permission to perform the original version in Western Germany, show Brecht's tactics: cheerful compliance, even subservience in his dealings with the authorities on the one hand, stubborn persistence in his own essential convictions on the other.

There is a passage in the *Life of Galilei* that throws a good deal of light on Brecht's attitude in these matters: one of his friends is horrified by the grovelling tone of the letter in which Galilei solicits the favours of the Medici. Galilei replies:

> You think my letter too subservient? I ask myself is it subservient *enough?* Not too formal, as though I lacked genuine devotion? . . . A man like I am can get into a moderately dignified position only by crawling on his belly. And you know I despise people whose brains are unable to fill their stomachs.[16]

To make up for *Lucullus* and to prove their usefulness to the régime, Brecht and Dessau followed it up by producing one of the most blatant pieces of propaganda hack-work of their careers. It is a choral cantata, *Herrnburger Bericht* (Report on Herrnburg), written for performance by youth groups during the East German World Youth Festival in the summer of 1951. The theme is an incident from the previous year, when West German police had tried to stop a large contingent of young Western communists from recrossing the zonal frontier in force. Dessau, who had been accused of failing to write music of propaganda value, produced a pastiche of folksong to the accompaniment of such recognised popular instruments as accordions, guitars, mandolins, etc., and Brecht manfully tried to express politically acceptable sentiments.

> . . . . Adenauer, Adenauer, show us your hand
> For thirty pieces of silver you sell our land,[17]

is a fair sample of the studied banality of this verse, which almost makes it appear intentional, as if designed to expose its absurdity. Yet Brecht no doubt meant it seriously enough. He was merely too good a poet to be able to write such stuff to order.

It is significant that *Herrnburger Bericht* was never published in its entirety by Brecht in the issues of his *Versuche*, which appeared at regular intervals till he died, and that he did not include it in the collected edition of his plays or any of the various anthologies of his poetry published in his lifetime. Nor has Dessau published any of the Herrnburg songs in his volume of Brecht songs, published in 1957.[18] Although *Herrnburger Bericht* is still in print in East Germany, the publishers declare that it is not for export.

On the other hand it was certainly for *Herrnburger Bericht* rather than for *The Trial of Lucullus* that Brecht received the National Prize for Literature, First Class, from the East German government in 1951.

BUT the fact that he was a national laureate and a member of the Academy of Arts did not exempt Brecht from further and even more serious attack. This was the last phase of Stalin's reign, a time of trials, purges, and terror. In the cultural field it was the period of the campaign against 'cosmopolitanism.' In East Germany this coincided with a return to violent chauvinism, partly to win over the masses who were still largely conditioned by National Socialism, partly to lend weight to the propaganda line that East Germany represented the true spirit of the nation. Brecht had always been nauseated by German chauvinism. He disliked the school book view of the German classics. No wonder that he fell foul of the party line.

In Brecht's view the German people had to make a fresh start and to cut themselves loose from much of their tradition. To show them the mistakes and failures of the past he began to revive some of the classical plays of the German repertory with the object of showing the values they represented in a critical light, and of drawing the German public's attention to the

[16] Brecht, *Leben des Galilei*, Stuecke VIII, p. 53.

[17] Brecht/Dessau, 'Herrnburger Bericht,' *Neues Deutschland*, 22 July 1951.

[18] Brecht/Dessau, *Lieder und Gesaenge* (East Berlin, 1957).

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moral and material squalor of their own past—*deutsche Misere*. Already in 1950 he had turned an eighteenth century play, *Der Hofmeister* (The Private Tutor), by J. M. R. Lenz, into a vitriolic attack on the subservience of German intellectuals and schoolmasters to the whims of the rich and powerful: the hero of the play, Laeuffer, finds that his sexual instinct interferes with the performance of his duties as a private tutor, so he castrates himself to show his willingness to serve his master. The régime accepted this performance, one of the most brilliant ever put on by the Berlin Ensemble, with relatively good grace. The mad genius, Lenz, after all, had never been an acknowledged German classic. But when, in the following year, Kleist's *Zerbrochener Krug* (The Broken Jug) was put on to display the corruption and hypocrisy of rural life and the administration of justice in eighteenth century Germany, this was considered to go too far: the honour of the nation was being dragged in the mud. And when Brecht went a step further by producing Goethe's *Faust* in its original form (*Urfaust*) the storm broke. *Neues Deutschland* attacked Brecht's young pupil Egon Monk, who had produced the play, for following in the footsteps of his master: 'The producer Monk copied models we have already encountered in *The Private Tutor* and *The Broken Jug*. They too were fatalistic and pessimistic pictures of static conditions; they had only one hero—"German wretchedness." This expresses an attitude—an attitude in fact directed against Germany's cultural heritage, against Germany's national culture.'[19] What particularly shocked the national feelings of *Neues Deutschland* was the scene in Auerbach's cellar, in which the drunken students had been made to bawl out some German folk songs. 'Never before have we seen a similar mockery of German folk-song on our stage! . . . Abandon your forced primitivism, your artistic economy of means, be not afraid to say yes to the best artistic products of our past and you will produce wonderful, great theatre. We feel we must say that the young members of the Berlin Ensemble, many of whom are very talented, are being led astray by the methods and principles applied in the adaptation of the classics by Bertolt Brecht, the artistic director of the Ensemble.'

[19] Quoted in Ruehle, *Das gefesselte Theater*, p. 244.

Such an attack was a serious threat not only to Brecht but to the continued existence of the Berlin Ensemble. It coincided with a second, and perhaps even more serious threat: the campaign to make Stanislavsky's method the only style of acting permitted in East Germany.

In April 1953 a 'Stanislavsky Conference' was held in East Berlin. Actors and producers from all over Eastern Germany were lectured on the absolute necessity to follow the Soviet style: 'The Soviet theatre is the most highly developed form of theatre in history,' said *Neues Deutschland* in an article on the conference, and it went on: 'We are compelled to state here that the reprehensible underestimation of the significance of the Stanislavsky method for the development of a German national theatre is the main reason why the fight against formalism and cosmopolitanism on the stage has not yet reached that sharpness of principle which alone can guarantee a decisive breakthrough towards socialist realism in our theatre.'[20] And if there was still any doubt against whom this was directed, the following passage removed it: 'Are there not—and we all know it, above all in our capital city—performances in which admittedly "great theatre" is produced under the direction of great artists, but in which nevertheless formalism and its twin brother schematism look out from every nook and cranny, starting from the choice of plays, right down to the adaptation, the basic production idea, the production itself, the decor and the method of acting?'

Helene Weigel tried to parry the blow by declaring in the course of the conference debates that there *were* some things in common between the Brechtian theatre and the Stanislavsky method: accuracy of observation, ensemble acting, truthfulness, naturalness, etc. But the party was far too acutely aware of the real situation to be taken in. *Neues Deutschland* replied: '. . . . Helene Weigel . . . . may have been right insofar as there is always something of Stanislavsky anywhere in the theatre where work is done conscientiously, with artistic ability and craftsmanship and on the basis of socialist convictions . . . . But insofar as the Berlin Ensemble tries to put into practice Brecht's theoretical views embodied in *Kleines Organon*

[20] 'Fuer den Sieg des sozialistischen Realismus auf der Buehne,' *Neues Deutschland*, 17 April 1953.

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fuer das Theater and his other writings, it is undeniably in opposition to everything the name Stanislavsky stands for. The two leaders of the Ensemble must surely be the last people to hide their heads in the sand when faced with these facts.'[21]

Such language could not be ignored. Brecht promptly announced that he had already begun to study Stanislavsky. And Western newspapers were already speculating on the imminent demise of the Berlin Ensemble. Their prophecies proved wrong—the party critics themselves had been overtaken by events. They believed that they were still following the party line. But the party line had already changed. For in the meantime Stalin had died and the thaw had set in.

Stalin's death threw the party authorities in Eastern Germany into confusion and disarray. While the attacks on cosmopolitans and anti-Stanislavskians continued, some concessions were made to the masses, who had become restive. On 17 June 1953 the people of Eastern Germany rose in open revolt. For a few hours the régime lost control. Then Soviet tanks restored order.

On 21 June, *Neues Deutschland* published the following brief item of news:

'National Prize Laureate Bertolt Brecht has sent the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party, Walter Ulbricht, a letter in which he declares: "I feel the need to express to you at this moment my attachment to the Socialist Unity Party. Yours Bertolt Brecht." '

This piece of news was immediately picked up in Western Germany, where it aroused a storm of indignation. Many who greatly admired Brecht as an outstanding German poet were outraged at seeing Brecht so brazenly support a régime that had called out Soviet tanks to shoot down unarmed workers demonstrating against intolerable living conditions. His message seemed to be couched in such unequivocal terms that there could be no doubt about the meaning of this 'telegram,' as it soon came to be called. Brecht had clearly lost the claim to be considered as anything but an obedient, unthinking follower of the masters who paid for his services by providing him with a theatre and a life of luxury, while the workers starved.

For once Brecht had been too clever. He still believed in the Marxist doctrine, he still believed that it could be put into practice in East Germany. He had thought that he could use the opportunity to put forward his criticisms of the methods of the régime in a long and closely argued letter. But, as the Swiss correspondent Gody Suter later reported, 'of that whole long clever piece of writing only the one sentence, which had been of no importance to Brecht, remained. The red pencil of the party line had destroyed his cunning design .... and had turned him in the eyes of the West into a loyal henchman of the executioners. His independent position, the platform of a kind of "inner opposition," was suddenly revealed as a grotesque illusion; a well-aimed blow by the party's paw had smashed the reputation Brecht had built up for himself by long and patient effort. The only time that I saw him helpless, almost small, was when he eagerly pulled the tattered original of that letter, that he had obviously shown to many people, from his pocket.'[23]

There can be no doubt that this version of the incident is correct. If any proof were needed it is furnished by an official East German publication. The organ of the German Academy of Arts, the periodical *Sinn und Form*, published a voluminous commemorative number after Brecht's death. This contains an excellent bibliography of Brecht's writings, compiled by Mr. Walter Nubel of New York, but with the obvious co-operation of Brecht's own circle. This bibliography, which lists even the minutest contributions by Brecht to newspapers and periodicals, enters the famous message to Ulbricht, under number C.370, as follows:

> (Bertolt Brecht to Walter Ulbricht). Neues Deutschland (Berlin) No. 143, 21st June 1953. (On the occasion of the Berlin riots of June 17th 1953. *Final sentence of a letter*).[24]

This, however discreetly it may be done, clearly puts it on record that the party distorted, and

[21] *Neues Deutschland*, quoted in *Berliner Stimme*, 6 June 1953.

[23] Gody Suter, 'Brecht,' *Tagesanzeiger* (Zürich), 1 September 1956.

[24] *Sinn und Form*, 2nd Special Brecht Issue, 1957, p. 560.

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thereby virtually forged, the message of loyalty to Ulbricht which earned Brecht the detestation of many of his erstwhile admirers.

Towards the end of 1954 Brecht was awarded the Stalin Peace Prize. In May 1955 he journeyed to Moscow to receive it, and returned to deposit a large proportion of his 160,000 roubles of prize money in his Swiss bank account, to the undisguised dismay and fury of the East German party stalwarts.

THE abolition of the State Commission for the Arts may have eased the situation for Brecht and his theatre, but in essentials it changed little. The great success of the Berlin Ensemble at the Paris Festival of 1954, and the interest in the Brechtian theatre which it engendered throughout Western Europe, certainly put its future out of danger: it had become too obvious a propaganda asset and any drastic action against it would have provoked too much adverse publicity. So the Ensemble was left in relative peace and freedom: Brecht continued to produce his old plays, with an occasional Soviet or Chinese communist play thrown in, as well as from time to time a local party product. In January 1955, for example, the Ensemble produced a play by the late Johannes R. Becher, then Minister for Culture, *Winterschlacht* (Winter Battle), a feeble attempt at putting the Hamlet theme into the setting of Hitler's Russian campaign. But the performance had bad notices in the party press: the hero had not been shown in a positive enough light. Sometimes *Neues Deutschland* ignored first nights of the Berlin Ensemble altogether, notably that of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. And Brecht's plays were not given a very good showing by the other theatres of the Soviet zone. At the Fourth (East) German Writers' Congress in January 1956, Brecht rather bitterly remarked: 'The theatres of the German Democratic Republic are—regrettably from my point of view—among the few theatres in Europe that do not perform my plays.' He went on to criticise the continued bureaucratic supervision of literary work: 'Young *Dramaturgen* of the Berlin Ensemble have adapted plays for amateurs. To make these plays available to amateur groups they must be published. But they cannot be published because the "Office for Literature" does not grant the financial aid required. This shows an astonishing lack of political instinct—I am not even speaking of artistic instinct. It is a scandal—among others.' In the same speech Brecht returned to the general lack of initiative shown in the Soviet Zone: 'You cannot have your revolutions made by Ministries alone. This is a special feature of the *Deutsche Misere* that we still have with us: that people are always looking at others . . . .'[25]

By the time Brecht made this speech he had grown visibly weary—weary not only of the constant struggle against bureaucrats like those who tried to prevent the publication of his volume of anti-war photographs and quatrains *Kriegsfibel* on the grounds that it was 'too pacifist,'[26] but also of the ruthless oppression of the common people by the government of the German Democratic Republic. He was violently opposed to the whole apparatus of secret police, informers, and concentration camps, and particularly hated the then Deputy Head of the State Security Service, Mielke (who has since become Minister of State Security).

Nevertheless, Brecht remained a Marxist to the end. His touching, almost religious, faith in the truth of the Marxist theory sustained in him the hope, however faint it became in the last months of his life, that the terrible reality of communist practice would in the end be superseded by a society based on Confucian friendliness and courtesy.

In conversations with his more intimate friends on the evils of the Eastern and the Western type of society, Brecht used to illustrate his view by a parable: A doctor in a hospital has two patients, equally horribly afflicted with venereal disease, equally repulsive from a moral point of view: an old lecher and a pregnant prostitute. If he has only enough penicillin to save one of these two patients, will he not *have* to save the woman, because there still might be a chance that she would give birth to a healthy child? In the same way, Brecht argued, the rotten Ulbricht régime must be regarded as possibly a transition to better things and must

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[25] Brecht, 'Ausfuehrungen vor der Sektion Dramatik,' *Beiträge zur Gegenwartsliteratur* (East Berlin), January 1956, p. 153.

[26] 'Brecht beinahe verboten,' *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 November 1955.

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therefore be supported. At least this régime paid lip-service to the idea that society must be changed . . . . That was the hope to which he clung.

Wolfgang Harich, the brilliant young Marxist philosopher who had been Brecht's ally in the fight against the party's culture bureaucrats, categorically stated—in his manifesto against Ulbricht which later led to his being sentenced to ten years' penal servitude—that Brecht shared his opposition to the régime:

> Bertolt Brecht sympathised with our group up to the time of his death and saw in it the healthy forces of our party. In our frequent discussions with Bertolt Brecht we could see how bitterly he felt about the existing conditions in the GDR.[27]

From all we know it is certain that this claim is correct. Brecht agreed with Harich's attitude to Marxism and the party:

> We do not intend to break with the Communist party. We don't want to become renegades like, for example, the ex-communist Koestler. We don't want to break with Marxism-Leninism, but we want to free it from Stalinism and dogmatism and to bring it back to its humanist and undogmatic way of thinking.

Harich's group was ruthlessly dealt with after the Hungarian revolution of October 1956. Would Brecht have been among those who were arrested and tried, like Harich, and among whom there were many of his pupils and friends? Probably not. He was far too cautious and unheroic to have left any clear evidence of his being implicated with such foolhardy young people. But he escaped the terrible moral dilemma the events in Hungary would have presented to him—a feeling of guilt far deeper than that engendered by the East German rising of 1953, which had caused him such guilty dreams. For with his usual uncanny sense of timing Brecht died ten weeks before the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution.

Brecht's attitude to the problem of freedom in a communist society coincided with the views of the communist intellectuals who supported Gomulka in Poland and who belonged to the Petoefi circle in Hungary. In the last months of his life he was working on a translation of 'Poem for Adults' by the Polish poet Adam Wazyk—a vehement attack on the inhumanity of the Stalinist brand of communism. George Lukacs, the great Hungarian Marxist literary critic and philosopher, who played an important part in the Hungarian revolution, was one of Brecht's closest friends and one of the main speakers at the memorial meeting in the Schiffbauerdamm Theatre after Brecht's death. And among the obituary tributes published by *Neues Deutschland* we find one from another friend of his, the Hungarian playwright Gyula Hay, one of the leaders of the Hungarian revolutionary intellectuals, whose message already foreshadowed the coming events:

> We Hungarian writers have in recent times had particular occasion to reflect on how far literary progress can be linked with politics in our daily struggles. In my thoughts I have often turned to Brecht and from his works I have gained the conviction that a writer cannot and must not spare himself, when the truth is at stake; and that eventually the truth will not fail a writer who remains loyal to it. Posterity will learn a very, very great deal from him, more than can even be imagined today.[28]

These words sounded harmless enough in August 1956. In the light of subsequent events their meaning is all too clear.

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[27] Harich's Manifesto, quoted by *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 21 March 1957.

[28] Julius Hay: 'Es ist unfassbar . . . .', *Neues Deutschland*, 18 August 1956.

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ANGLO-SOVIET ATTITUDES

A Guide to Cultural Exchange

Ronald Hingley

SINCE the War cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union have passed through the narrow defile of Stalinism into the broad expansive plains of Khrushchevism. In the Stalin era not many Englishmen apart from political sympathisers seem to have been invited to Russia. As for Soviet cultural emissaries to England at that time, they were not very numerous either, and tended to be frigidly reserved in their dealings with us.

In their eagerness to make Soviet friends, many Englishmen tried to ignore this reserve. They often talked with enthusiasm of the warm human qualities of visitors who, if they were no more than what they allowed us to see of them, less resembled men than machines. That many of these seeming automata actually were very human beings, recent relaxations have allowed us to see.

Characteristic of the Stalin period were the visits to England of individual prominent Russians, including writers such as Fedin and Polevoy. Supported by one or two officials from his embassy and by an interpreter, the touring V.I.P. would hold public or semi-public meetings at which he would offer to answer questions about the Soviet Union. Those which I remember best took place in London and were attended chiefly by students of Russian.

Question and answer always followed a pattern. Almost by tradition the first question was, 'Why can't we go and study at a Russian university?' When this was translated to him, the speaker would look as if he could scarcely believe what he heard. Expressing by every facial muscle and gesture his surprise that anyone could ask a question to which the answer was so obvious, he would reply: 'We welcome you with open arms' (*milosti prosim*). The trouble with this was that everyone present, including the speaker, knew perfectly well that at that time no English student had the remotest chance of getting anywhere near a Soviet university. A typical Anglo-Soviet attitude had been struck. Frustrated by the answer, succeeding questioners would become increasingly provocative. They tried to score points about single-list elections or the position of Soviet writers. But it was they themselves who got scored off. The Soviet visitor, a bland, self-confident and venerable matador, flanked by his skilled picadors, easily eluded these clumsy charges, placed his darts and sword-thrusts at will in his floundering antagonists and left the *corrida* with a flourish of his red star-spangled cape. Short of presenting him with his victims' sliced off ears, the English audience had in effect done everything possible to help him achieve a triumph which contributed nothing to cordiality and can hardly have been intended to do so by the Russians.

Another feature of the Stalinist period was a tendency for the English contacts of Soviet visitors to be confined to the members of various captive or semi-captive 'front organisations' not qualified to give them a representative impression of the population at large.

Khrushchev came to power, and with his arrival the frown on the face of the Russian sphinx crinkled into a mask of goodwill. The number of cultural exchanges was stepped up, and included the Moscow Youth Festival of 1957. Two years before that, in April 1955, an important step had been taken on our side when the British Council set up its Soviet Relations Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Christopher Mayhew, M.P. Presiding over (but not usually participating in) many cultural and other exchanges from then on, the Committee has been able to make it easier for Soviet visitors to meet more representative British citizens. A tendency towards well-meaning but inefficient amateurism in British organisation of Soviet visits soon began to disappear under the guidance of a professionally responsible body which has also done much to supply the necessary funds.

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THE new, Khrushchevite, persona of the travelling Russian was a big improvement on the old. But the broad grin and back-slapping sometimes blinded people to the calculated naiveté and disingenuousness that were so often part of the same package. Typical of this was a conversation I remember having about two years ago in a Moscow taxi with a Soviet trade union official who was explaining to me the ambitious plan for rebuilding Moscow. I asked him when the programme would be finished, to which he answered: 'That doesn't depend on us. It depends on you.' What he meant was, on the international situation, for which he pretended to hold me personally responsible. The idea that international problems are something entirely brought about by *others* is not confined to Soviet Russians. But at least it is as typical of them as of anyone else.

To the realm of disingenuousness also belongs the inevitable suggestion that all 'honest' Englishmen privately subscribe to the Soviet line on all major questions of policy, but are prevented from saying so by fear of the authorities. Many Soviet Russians seem seriously to believe this. It is one of their many impressions of the West which can be lumped together under the title of 'mirror images' or, more whimsically, 'Malice through the Looking-glass'—that is, they seem to be the result of attributing to the West, of which they are ignorant, features of their own society which they are not permitted to mention.

Most unwelcome to me of the various forms of disingenuousness is the tendency, which scarcely requires illustration, to talk in a certain tone of voice about peace. Obviously Soviet Russians, just like the rest of us, mean what they say when they claim to want peace. But the formulas in which they have been taught to express this carry with them a host of unpleasant buried implications. It is of course almost a platitude to say that it is nearly always the most aggressive Soviet Russians who talk most about peace.

IT is not clear to me how much importance I should attach to my most recent experience of Anglo-Russian relations—the Moscow-Oxford University exchange of last summer. I hope that it may be possible to see here a neo-Khrushchevite phase, for this has been by far the most civilised episode in the story of my own contacts with Soviet Russians. Each university sent a group of about twenty teachers and students to take part in a course organised by the other. I was fortunate to be involved in both these visits, acting as Dean to the Muscovites while they were in Oxford in July, and later going on our touring party to Moscow.

There was on these occasions a minimum of offensiveness coated with edifying abstract nouns, little of what George Orwell called 'duckspeak' about peace, and, what is most important, a frank admission that an enormous ideological gap separates the two sides. An emphasis on the existence of this gap, made by the leader of the Russian party at the beginning of their course in Oxford, dismayed a number of Englishmen as yet unversed in Soviet ways, but in fact it put our relations on a sensible footing right from the start.

In Moscow our Soviet hosts set their usual high standard of hospitality. In these exchanges it is they who are the professionals, while we, as I have already suggested, can at the most regard ourselves as enthusiastic and (one hopes) increasingly competent amateurs. On the material side they have all the advantages which come from their method of giving high priority and a correspondingly high budget to approved projects. They also have other advantages due to the fact that they are dealing with a local population which can be ordered around in a way luckily impossible in England.

Like most delegates to Russia I can remember many instances when people who happened to be standing in a queue ahead of me, were simply told to get out of the way by our guides. I remember passengers in the Moscow Metro being made to give up their seats—a thing which would have stung even the phlegmatic commuters of the Bakerloo Line to violence. I also remember the same sort of thing in Leningrad railway station when passing through on to the platform for the Moscow train. A voice may be raised in muffled protest: 'We too are passengers,' whereupon one experiences an absurd irrational desire to rap out: 'Take that man's name.' One is of course grateful for special treatment and the real pains taken by Russians to make visitors comfortable, but this kind of thing can lead to embarrassment.

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There were many moments during the Moscow University visit to England when I could have wished for a similar authority. On one occasion their party had to be brought from London in order to keep a dinner engagement at an Oxford institution. I was told that if we arrived later than half past seven there simply wouldn't be any dinner because the staff would down tools and go home. That would have been unlikely to happen in Moscow.

The greater control exercised by Russians on their own nationals enables them to keep a looser timetable, whereas I found as Dean and, in effect, also courier to the Russian party in England, that I often had to attempt to be rather officious about punctuality.

The English system puts a greater strain on the organisers, but gives great scope for our supposed genius for improvisation. This usually tends to be called fully into play because of the difficulty of discovering in advance exactly when a given Russian party will arrive and exactly how many people will be in it. There has perhaps been a Russian party which arrived in this country on time and in the agreed numbers. But if so it has not been one of those I have been concerned with.

This feature of exchanges causes all sorts of difficulties with hotels, out of which English guests cannot unceremoniously be flung on the spur of the moment. But one must make up one's mind to be flexible and unworried in meeting sudden crises caused by such unannounced changes of plan undertaken without any wish to cause inconvenience. The point is that they actually would cause much less inconvenience under Soviet conditions—at least to the organisers. We have to regard them, so to speak, as all part of the game.

If the Moscow-Oxford exchange of last summer can be taken as a guide, Anglo-Russian relations are entering on a new era of smoothness as each side acquires more skill and grows in understanding of the other. On previous occasions food has always bulked heavily in my experience as a source of friction—almost as a weapon in the Cold War. Etched in my memory is an appallingly dismal tea, such as only the worst type of English hotel could produce, offered to a touring Russian chess team somewhere in the Home Counties. They would have had every justification in interpreting this as a deliberate insult.

The Russian way of handling food as a weapon of war is of course very different. Less play is made than in the above-mentioned hotel tea with the damply sprouting souls of waitresses, for Russian waitresses are generally very pleasant and cheerful, but the general effect can be not less productive of despondence. I shall not easily forget my experiences a few years ago when I went to the Soviet Union as interpreter to a delegation with certain technical interests outside my own field. I had supposed that my main problems would be those of specialised vocabulary. In fact they turned out to be less linguistic than digestive, although I believe that I personally suffered less in this way than any of the delegates.

Russian goodwill banquets have been described often enough and the concept is a sufficiently familiar one. Everyone has heard of lavish Russian hospitality, and I myself have good reason to know what a delightful thing that can be. But on this particular visit many of our hosts gave the impression that they were chiefly interested in hospitality as a means of lowering our morale rather than of promoting any sort of goodwill. Throughout all meals one was under a constant barrage of interrogation, obviously intended to annoy beneath the veneer of heartiness. Why was one not eating more caviar, smoked sturgeon, cheese, *bœuf Stroganoff*? Why was one not drinking more Narzan, beer, Georgian wine, vodka, Soviet champagne, Armenian cognac? No wonder Russian has at least five different words for 'why.'

Typically, a kind of prestige issue was made out of this. The honest, hearty, all-embracing Russian stomach was, so to speak, held out for comparison against its squeamish and etiolated British counterpart. Yet in fact one only had to observe our hosts' plates to see that they were no better than we were at eating their own enormous piles of food. Long before the *zakuski* had been finished and before the main course had even appeared on the table, saturation point was regularly reached all round. It was impossible to refuse anything, so that by the end of the meal everyone was staring glassily at congealing mounds.

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One breakfast time when, after spending the night in a state of routine digestive malaise, I was trying to refuse vodka mixed with salt (seemingly the national remedy) and greasy sardines, I was reproached for causing offence by not partaking more fully. I replied that I would rather be rude and well than polite and ill. But I was only told that in Tsarist times certain arctic peoples of Imperial Russia had carried goodwill to an even more severe extreme, offering not only food and drink to their guests, but also their own wives. 'And if you refuse he is your deadly enemy.'

Perhaps things are improving all round. Or perhaps university circles operate on a higher level of civilisation in these matters. Anyway, there was absolutely none of this nonsense about food during my period as a guest of Moscow University, where we were well fed without any fuss at all.

ONE great advantage which the Russians have in operating these exchanges is that they are so genuinely sociable. No less advantageous is their sense of humour. Even among the most ruggedly orthodox Party members one now seems to meet some who can make jokes against themselves as well as against us. Particularly endearing was a humorous threat by members of a recent Russian party of visitors to go and stage a demonstration outside their own Embassy, which at one point had apparently failed to meet their wishes in some respect; this was made topical at the time because of the Moscow demonstrations outside our Embassy in connection with the Iraq crisis.

They easily seem to fall into terms of light banter which can form an effective conversational lubricant. It was with diffidence that, after leading a party across Hyde Park and confronting them with the Albert Memorial, I compared that structure with the almost equally ornate Moscow Metro. The remark was *risqué*, since as a cult object the Metro still rates high, but it passed. Incidentally, I remember how, when I was first escorted round the Metro in the usual delegation run-around, I failed to appreciate its sterling qualities as a really superb piece of public transport, just because my guides so obviously expected me to pause every few seconds and give a gasp of amazement. This was another typical Anglo-Russian attitude, but one which Russians themselves, to whom I have since explained it, have met with sympathetic understanding of my point of view.

Another way in which our Moscow University contacts operated on a high level of courtesy was to me the most spectacular of all. While defending their own view of things with firmness and dignity, our guest-hosts failed to obtrude into our dealings that extravagant insistence on national prestige which has bedevilled previous cultural contacts in which I have been involved. My baptism of fire came at an early age, when an exchange scheme was embarked upon between my own school and a German boarding school in about 1935.

The Germans, whose school leaving age was higher than ours, treated the episode as a military operation. They sent over a husky crew of picked Hitlerjugend athletes who turned up wearing trilby hats and plus fours (already a major stroke of nerve warfare) and, after divesting themselves of these, proceeded solemnly to beat us heavily at running, jumping, swimming, and even, I seem to remember, rugby football, which they had never played before. We won only one contest—a digging competition to help level a playing field—but that only by shifting the markers when they were not looking. Is this best interpreted as an example of perfidious Albion at work? Or as a specimen of the British genius for improvisation? At least the Germans never found out and honour was, in a sense, restored.

A similar tendency to turn contacts with the West into 'elite projects' has often been shown by Soviet representatives. During the technical mission to which I alluded above I remember fighting a constant running rearguard action of counter-lifemanship. It was interesting to see with what persistence we were continually manipulated into pre-determined postures of an embarrassing or even mildly humiliating nature.

Especially characteristic was one incident which occurred in Sochi, where I was invited to swim in the sea, something which, as it happened, I very much wanted to do. I asked for the loan of some swimming trunks, but was told that it would be quite in order to bathe without a costume, since this particular beach was reserved for men. I don't mind swimming unclothed. But it is one thing to do so when

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everyone else is doing the same, and quite another when (as was the case in Sochi) everyone else is wearing a costume. My refusal soon made me the centre of a crowd of holiday-making workers, all jollying me on into the water and rendered almost hysterical at the thought of a lone naked Englishman on the crowded beach. When they finally realised that there was nothing doing unless they undressed me by force and flung me in the sea themselves, bathing trunks suddenly appeared. All along a large pile of them had been available nearby. I put them on and dived into the water, knowing that I had struck a blow for the British Commonwealth of Nations. The incident was one of many which could form the basis of a detailed comparison between Soviet society and an English prep school.

On its own this incident would have meant nothing at all. The point is that it was part of a general pattern. Almost everywhere we went during that visit there was a wish, perhaps not consciously realised, to make us look slightly ridiculous. Similar incidents involved one being beaten at chess by grinning boy geniuses seven years old, or being photographed attempting to perform Ukrainian folk dances with little girls from a kindergarten. In keeping also was the occasion one night over dinner in a workers' rest home when our hosts staged what amounted to a singing competition, Britain v. Russia. We sang alternately, they producing some extremely fine Russian folk songs with an obviously well-rehearsed descant from the waitresses. Our reply was a ragged, off-key rendering of 'She'll be coming down the mountain' and other even more shameful items from the national repertoire. This unequal contest was allowed to go on for a phenomenal length of time.

On such occasions one felt the presence of a powerful collective obsession, of a wish to demonstrate at all costs that they were better at everything than we were. This tendency to resolve all matters into questions of national prestige sometimes made ordinary conversation impossible. One was perpetually hearing how they were putting up more buildings than we, how their workers' pension schemes were, as they claimed, better then ours, their streets wider, their locomotives and goods trucks bigger and so on and so forth—precisely the sort of boasting associated in the British popular brain with Americans. The result of all this was that one continually had the sensation of losing marks in a competition for which one had never actually entered.

The national prestige issue also obtruded itself on the obverse side. Every time we saw a food queue, met a beggar, or passed a broken down shack we learned to close our eyes in pious aversion, lest our hosts, whom one could almost feel wince on these occasions, divert our attention once again to a new Palace of Culture or block of workers' flats.

In this inflamed atmosphere the most innocent remark was liable to cause unnecessary heart-searching. Once when descending the escalator in the Revolution Square station of the Moscow Metro, I remarked quite without malicious intent that it was a very long escalator, only to see a look of acute anxiety flash over the face of my Russian companion. I then realised that I had set him, all unintentionally, a problem not covered in his book of rules. Is a very long escalator, viewed in terms of national prestige, creditable or discreditable? A tricky point, since on the one hand an ability to build long escalators implies a minimum of engineering expertise, while on the other hand a short escalator is less inconvenient to the passenger. My friend evidently failed to solve this riddle, for he changed the subject instead of replying, as I was beginning to expect that he would, that English escalators must no doubt be shorter or (as the case might be) longer still.

THIS kind of attitude, so happily absent in our Moscow University contacts, tends to produce one of two undesirable reactions in the Englishman. Firstly, it tends to make him tell lies. Once in a holiday camp for miners' children in the Donbass I remember Britain being subjected to a fiercely provocative attack from an (obviously primed) adolescent because, as she said, Soviet geography was not taught in our schools. I firmly, and perhaps even rudely, asserted that it was. Only later on, when I took part as tutor in a summer school for British teachers of geography, did I learn that the accusation was in substance true, though some steps have since been taken to remedy things. The atmosphere at the holiday camp had been such that I had found myself laying down the

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law incorrectly about something of which I was at that time totally ignorant.

Another unfortunate effect of Soviet prestige-pushing on the uninstructed Englishman is to make him start running down his own country, on the quite mistaken theory that he will thus disarm his interlocutor with a display of fair-mindedness. I have never known this device work. The only sensible procedure seems to be gently to detach conversation from the invidious level of national comparisons of a debating-point variety—the kind of conversations in which the Russian phrases *U nas* and *U vas* (perhaps best thought of as 'chez nous' and 'chez vous') tend to predominate. To say this is not at all to suggest that our differences cannot be discussed in a sensible and level-headed manner. All credit to our Moscow University friends for not facing us to any notable extent with the problem of what one of my English colleagues happily termed 'those awful *U nas* conversations.'

If, as the Moscow-Oxford exchange suggests, we are now confronted with a welcome trend away from *U nas* in what may be called the direction of Non-*U nas*, no doubt Soviet Russia's industrial and technological strides are partly responsible. Boasting of the *U nas* type springs from a national inferiority complex with long roots in pre-revolutionary Russian history. The causes for this inferiority complex are being very rapidly removed, but changes in collective attitudes often lag behind changing conditions. The greater Russia's actual achievements, the less Russians will need to bemuse themselves and others with recitations of them.

ONE of the unfortunate effects of Russia has been to bring out certain of the more ridiculous Anglo-Saxon attitudes, particularly in a character-type which I term that of the 'Innocent.' The Innocent is rarely encountered in the exaggerated form in which, for the sake of vividness, I shall describe him, but the tendencies are fairly widespread.

Innocents are Englishmen who, on making their first contact with Soviet Russians, become unduly excited to find that these supposed mythological beasts have the usual complement of noses, legs, ears, etc., that fire does not spout from their ears or nostrils and in particular that many of them, far from being monsters, have great social charm. Having perhaps previously heard stories of how difficult Soviet Russians are to deal with, the Innocent cannot reconcile his previous information with what he now meets. All one has to do to get on with Soviet Russians, he has discovered, is to nod and grin at them. They nod and grin back, whereupon the walls of Jericho of previous Anglo-Russian misunderstandings collapse with a resounding crash. Problems over which cultural committees, politicians, and diplomats have vainly racked their brains now melt in the sunlight of a simple childlike smile.

Our Innocent is already beginning to feel that it is *his* charm, *his* sociability, *his* superiority in being able to nod and grin in some unusually ingratiating way, which have brought about this miracle. Already he begins to feel patronising about people who, because they have had dealings with Russians before, can be dismissed as having 'preconceived ideas,' but who in fact know that something more than the nodding and grinning formula is needed if real contact is to be established.

The category of Innocents has nothing at all to do with being a political fellow-traveller; they are as likely to be conservative Members of Parliament as anything else. As a graduate nodder and grinner myself, I have tried to learn patience with them, knowing that as their experience increases they will change their views. In fact they will themselves learn in time just how irritating it can be to be given tips on how to treat Soviet Russians by a succeeding wave of nodders and grinners.

One feature of the Innocent is an excessive preoccupation with the dangers of giving offence to Soviet Russians, who are actually a good deal more robust and thick-skinned than he imagines. It is true that they can on occasion, in order to gain some tactical advantage, make great play of parading some real or fancied slight. But as often as not this is the result of a decision previously taken in cold blood. Almost as little progress will be made in achieving contact by an Englishman exaggeratedly concerned under all circumstances not to give offence as by the (fortunately rarer) type which actually wants to give offence.

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The following is a characteristic trap into which a typical Innocent will fall. We shall suppose that a given party of Englishmen contains a Mr. X who enjoys heated arguments with Marxists on such subjects as the Middle East and whether Britain is a genuinely capitalist country or not. If X shows himself capable of defending a non-Soviet point of view with spirit and ability, word will be passed by the Russians to the Innocents: 'Everybody here is so nice, so understanding . . . . Only X seems a bit prejudiced.' Soon the Innocent is agreeing with the Russians that X is some kind of fanatical diehard, and can even be induced to go round maligning X along these lines among his fellow-Innocents. This sort of thing does no good to cultural exchanges. It is all the harder to cope with because of course the error of over-provocativeness easily can be committed on our side, and cannot always be easily distinguished, in the weird context of Anglo-Soviet attitudes, from reasonable argument.

WHAT is the clue to making useful contact with Soviet Russians? All that can be said is that it does not lie in any simple formula. Still less than in the automatically 'soft' approach of the nodder and grinner does it lie in any kind of automatic 'toughness.' Nor is there, so to speak, any one point on the scale between Soft and Hard where the golden mean may be said to lie. The first essential is to realise that we are dealing with a phenomenon essentially complex and unfamiliar to us in our natural habitat. Sensitivity, tact, and sympathy rarely come amiss, but there are times when sheer obstinacy may also be a help.

During my stay in Moscow University last summer I was housed with other members of the Oxford party, in great comfort and seclusion in the vast new university building which dominates Moscow from the Lenin Hills. Even in Moscow it is fashionable to sneer at this gigantic edifice, which, with its enormous halls, marble colonnades, glistening mirrors, fabulous lift system and general air of purposeful decorum, seems to one in one's more frivolous moments like a gigantic film set which awaits only the arrival of Harpo Marx to reduce its pretensions to human size by sliding down banisters, fusing lights, pulling professorial beards and chasing lift-girls.

Some departments remain temporarily in the old university buildings on Mokhovaya Street in the centre of Moscow. Among those who still work there are to be heard voices of regret about their eventual transfer, which will be completed in a few years, to the Lenin Hills. The more cynical Muscovites tend to make the joke that the new University has only one advantage—it is the only building in Moscow from which one cannot see the new University.

Certainly the building has some disadvantages. With its vast statues and pinnacles it contains features characteristic of the now condemned 'architectural excesses' phase. The proportion of 'useful space'—a criterion now most sensibly applied in Soviet building—must be low because of the huge size of the various halls which serve purely as channels of communication. Furthermore, the perversely symmetrical plan of the interior makes it difficult to find one's way about. It is no mere *jeu d'esprit* to suggest how valuable a pocket compass would be in these surroundings. We lived in one corner of the building. Once having lost our bearings we were liable when looking for our rooms to end up in the diametrically opposite section of the building in an area which looked exactly like our own normal place of residence, but was in fact at least a quarter of a mile away.

Sitting alone in my room, I sometimes fell a prey to the fancy that there in the corresponding room on the other side lurked the Other—one's own duplicate, mirror-image self, with whom perhaps, some stormy day under a marble portico, one would have a meeting no less disastrous than that of the twin Golyadkins in Dostoevsky's novel *The Double*.

Moscow's University has, like its Metro, been conceived to some extent as a cult object—hence its unnecessarily extravagant décor—but this should not blind one to its practical and positive features. The students' rooms, though small, are wonderfully designed. The lecture rooms are splendid in their acoustics and appointments. Shortage of time made it impossible to explore fully the whole vast establishment, but the geological museum on one of the upper floors made a particularly memorable impression, as did the vistas of Moscow and the countryside around, which opened up on every side.

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Russian University education in the humanities differs very much from our own. The emphasis in teaching is more on lectures, attendance at which is compulsory. Since terms are much longer in Moscow than Oxford, and most courses last two years longer than ours, it seems likely that the average student at Moscow attends perhaps ten times as many lectures as does his Oxford opposite number. It remains to be seen what incursions will be made on this by the reorganisation of Soviet universities announced by Mr. Khrushchev in the autumn.

Perhaps the biggest difference, so far as the humanities are concerned, lies in the emphasis placed by the Russians on vocational training, whereas our educational aims are more general. In a lecture to the Moscow Philological Faculty on British university education I expressed the difference, apologising in advance for any apparent tendentiousness, by saying that they aimed at producing 'specialists' while we aimed at producing 'people' (*lyudi*). This comparison went down very well. They gave me the impression that I had scored a legitimate point, though it was not my purpose to score points at all. Professor Samarin, the Dean of the Faculty, afterwards said he hoped I had not failed to notice that in addition to producing specialists the Russians too were not so bad at producing people. I agreed. The basic humanity of Russians has surely by now been proved indestructible.

Within the framework of the prescribed Marxist approach, Moscow University is an extremely serious institution. The lightness of touch which (or so we delude ourselves in my own university) does not necessarily exclude an equally serious intention, seems to be absent from their teaching. Voracious in their pursuit of culture and learning, Moscow scholars and students seem on the whole to read and work a lot more than their English counterparts. They are certainly much more concerned to give just that impression, whereas even among the most hard-working Oxford undergraduates and teachers it is still fashionable to affect an attitude of dilettantism in speaking of academic study.

The highest term of praise for a Soviet professor is to call him a *krupny ucheny*, an expression which, like the German *Gelehrter*, seems to my ear to carry depressing and almost priggish overtones only partly present in the English translation (great scholar). Inevitably, since Soviet humanitarian learning rests on a number of propositions, variable but at any given time indisputable, and deemed to embody revealed truths, some of their lectures had in our ears an incantational ring. For this reason our hosts tended to show to greater advantage in more informal contacts. Their curiosity about the West, their extremely penetrating intelligence, and their spontaneously friendly attitude all helped to make our meetings a success.

More remains to be done than has been achieved. But this exchange stands out in my own experience as marking a tremendous step forward. The mercury in the cultural exchange barometer had suddenly leapt up to the zero mark, or even perhaps slightly above. Against the background of other experiences to which I referred above, I find that encouraging for the future.

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'A mighty maze! But not without a plan'

SOVIET ECONOMY: TARGET FOR TOMORROW

Naum Jasny

IT is argued that the Soviet economy is the only one operated on the basis of plans, that it cannot exist without planning, and that the results obtained in the way of industrialisation have been reached by the wise use of the planning machinery. An analysis of the new seven-year plan, outlined in the Control Figures for 1959-65, will throw some light on this.[1]

The low birth rates during World War II and in the first post-war years will bring about a marked decline in the net access of labour during the operation of the new seven-year plan, with 1962 presumably at the bottom of the curve. This is of course a growth-retarding factor. There are also others (help to underdeveloped countries for example). Considering these factors, the rates of growth contemplated in the Control Figures for 1959-65 are high, perhaps too high. It is apparently hoped to overcome the growth-retarding effect of the diminished net access of labour by special measures.

Chief among these seem to be the reform of the school system and the abolition of private farming by the collectivised peasants and workers and employees. The future will show whether these and other possible measures will be enough to permit the rates of growth scheduled in the Control Figures. One thing seems certain: the exceeding of the target for hired labour, a common feature in the execution of all five-year plans, will probably be impossible during the period covered by the present seven-year plan. This will make it impossible to fulfil the targets for output unless the targets for labour productivity are reached. It is difficult to decide whether it was this specific situation which led to a more cautious setting of targets for labour productivity now than was the case in the past.

The control Figures for 1959-65 envisage the following rates of growth in national income and its major components by origin (the Soviet concept of national income):

	Percentage rise from 1958 to 1965
National income ...	62–65
Industry	80
of which	
producer goods ...	85–88
consumer goods ...	62–65
Construction	65 (a)
Freight transport ...	53
Official retail trade ...	57–62 (b)

(a) Net investment is expected to grow by about 70 per cent (see below). A discount for construction is made in view of a corresponding trend in the past.

(b) Kolkhoz trade is probably expected to decline sharply; hence the total rise in retail trade is planned at a measurably smaller rate than that stated.

An increase in industrial output of 80 per cent in seven years would of course be a great achievement in the specific conditions of the period. And, while we may doubt the possibility of target fulfilment for one reason or another, for example because of unavailability of all needed raw materials of farm origin or of all needed labour, by and large the target for industrial growth, implying an annual growth of close on 9 per cent, must be considered at least fairly realistic.

On the basis of some promises made by Khrushchev it might have been expected that the operation of the basic law of development of socialist economy—the greater growth in output of producer goods than of consumer goods—would be at least temporarily suspended. Yet the rate of growth in output of producer goods scheduled for 1959-65 is about one-third larger

[1] This paper is written on the basis of Khrushchev's *Theses on the Control Figures for* 1959-65, published in *Pravda*, 14 November 1958. In dealing with such a vast subject as the seven-year plan, an article of this length must necessarily be fragmentary and in great degree disproportionate.

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than that of consumer goods. This may be all right, so far as communist 'laws' are concerned, but it actually means a reversal of the trend that has operated for quite a while. Since 1948 the output of consumer goods has been expanding at about the same rate at the output of producer goods.

The targets set in the Control Figures for agricultural output have the advantage over earlier such targets that they are much less unrealistic.

While the Directives for the sixth five-year plan scheduled an output of 11 milliard *puds* of grain *for 1960,* the Control Figures envisage a grain output of 10-11 milliard puds for a date five years later. Still, an 8 per cent rise in agricultural output per year over seven years, implied in the target set, is quite an order. But let us not forget that this is a specifically Khrushchev order. And whatever Khrushchev's other faults may be, the ease with which he sets unfulfillable goals is fully matched by the cheerfulness with which he accepts their failure.

The target for total freight transports, assuming that it includes the transport of gas by pipe, seems small in relation to the targets for the other economic sectors. But over-optimism in estimating the gains from eliminating unnecessary and too long hauls and counter-hauls, and consequently in reducing transports relatively to total material production, is traditional in Soviet planning.

The separate targets for all major economic sectors seem to add up to somewhat more than the target for the national income as a whole (a rise of 62-65 per cent in seven years). If this is so, the planners may have put in a reserve, knowing full well that the target for total agricultural output is to a certain extent bluff, while the target for industry looks more like a maximum.

APPARENTLY for the first time since the first five-year plan, it is possible to calculate the major components of national income from the allocation end, even for 'defence'. National income by allocation is split in the USSR into the accumulation fund and the consumption fund. The accumulation fund is made up of net investment, adjusted for increase or decline in stockpiles. The consumption fund comprises everything else, i.e. personal incomes, including gratuitous services (social insurance, pensions, education and health), expenses on administration, and, last and most interesting, military expenditure. We shall return to defence expenditure after discussing the other components of the consumption fund.

The present writer does not consider himself an expert in propaganda, yet the wisdom of making promises that have no chance of fulfilment escapes him. Such substantial promises were made with reference to personal consumption prior to the publication of the Control Figures for 1959-65 that it was reasonable to expect—with due regard for a certain balance among the various consumption items—a much larger provision for personal incomes in the seven-year plan than that now disclosed by Khrushchev. The Soviet people have possibly got used to not believing in any promise; if they have not, the provisions of the plan must have been a great disappointment. The chief promises made will stand reviewing.

In the spring of 1957 Khrushchev launched a super-great campaign for reaching, by 1960, the United States level in per capita output of meat (the American level for milk had been promised for 1958). For meat this implied a 3.5-fold rise in output from the 1956 level. Scholars who cautiously gave warning that the target was unattainable were ridiculed in the crudest possible manner.[2] Collective farms all over the country were forced to accept programmes for a development of their livestock herds that would raise the meat output by the required amount in the three years remaining.

The average American does not just eat close on 200 lbs of meat per year. He also has a good house or apartment, consumes plenty of other foodstuffs, and is adequately provided with clothes. The citizen of the 'socialist' state had every reason to expect something comparable on the basis of Khrushchev's meat target. This campaign made sense only in connection with a great improvement in living standards generally.

At the plenary session of the Party central committee on 6 May 1958, Khrushchev delivered a great oration 'On the Accelerated Development of the Chemical Industry and par-

[2] See Khrushchev's speech in *Pravda*, 24 May 1957.

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ticularly of the Output of Synthetic Materials and of Goods made thereof for meeting the Needs of the Population and of the National Economy' (*Pravda,* 10 May 1958). The plan submitted by Khrushchev was, he said, prepared by order of the central committee. The cardinal feature of the programme was an increase in the output of fabrics in the eight years from 1957 to 1965 by not less than 17 metres per head. Since he gave the 1958 output as 39 metres, this amounted to a jump of 44 per cent in the per capita output and utilisation of fabrics. Obviously, such a rise makes sense only if the all-round purchasing power of the population were to increase roughly in proportion.

Khrushchev preceded his oration on the chemical industry by enumerating the planned increases in the output of the individual types of fabrics (wool, wool and cotton mixtures, rayon, rayon and cotton, etc.), except for cotton fabrics, which even in 1965 are to exceed all other types put together. But of course a precise figure for the output of cotton fabrics was implied in the figure for the total production of all fabrics per head in 1965, and for all fabrics other than cotton. Incidentally, Khrushchev did not bypass the opportunity to mention that the output of woollen fabrics in the USSR in 1965 was to exceed greatly that of the United States, but he neglected to mention that in the United States woollen fabrics are made of wool, whereas in the USSR they are made largely of cotton.

The resolution of the plenary session of the CC faithfully repeated all the details on the output of fabrics, but—and this passed without notice, as it was obviously intended to—Khrushchev's promised increase in per capita output of all fabrics by 17 metres in 1965 was not repeated.

THERE was no reference to the United States in the decision of the central committee and the Council of Ministers of the USSR (21 July 1957, published in *Pravda* 2 August 1957) on the construction of housing, but the task 'of liquidating the housing shortage in 10 to 12 years' is a vast one, since housing has been neglected for almost 30 years, while the urban population has trebled. Specific targets were set in the decision only for the years until 1960 inclusive, but they were very large. Both the state and the population themselves were to construct huge numbers of apartments and houses. Again, a large increase in money funds in the hands of individuals would be needed for constructing the houses in those cases where private building was foreseen, and for furnishing them (furniture is very expensive in the USSR). Only funds for furniture would be needed for houses and apartments to be built by the state. However, no large all-round expansion of the purchasing power of the population would be needed in this case, for a citizen of the 'socialist' state may well live in the tiny apartment to be constructed without eating close on 200 lbs of meat per head per year.

Other decisions taken during 1957 and 1958, promising larger or smaller improvements in living standards, all presupposing greater individual purchasing power, were of a minor order, and there is no space to discuss them here.

In these circumstances it must have come as an anti-climax when the Control Figures for 1959-65 promised an increase in nominal wages of only 26 per cent.[3] To underline the disappointing character of this wage level, the large promises discussed above (except possibly for housing) were scaled down. Khrushchev's promise implied a meat output of 20.5-21.0 million tons in 1960. The target announced in the Control Figures gives an output of 16 million tons in 1965. The Control Figures are supposed to include a year-by-year breakdown (see below). If and when this is made public, the Soviet citizen will see that the 1960 target for meat output in the new Control Figures is only about one half of that triumphantly set by Khrushchev in May 1957.

In a similar but not so drastic manner the target set in the Control Figures for the output of cotton goods in 1965 is below that implied in Khrushchev's speech of 6 May 1958.

A very important feature of the Control Figures on wages is the decision to break with their immense stratification, which was one of the mainstays of the 'Great Industrialisation Drive' from its very beginning. The minimum wages, only recently established (but at a very

[3] This promise was given in Khrushchev's speech as broadcast; it was omitted from the published text.

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low level) are to rise by about 80 per cent in the next seven years. The Control Figures promise little to those earning average wages, and possibly nothing at all to those at the top. Real wages are to rise by 40 per cent, according to the Control Figures. How the great difference between this rise, and the rise of 26 per cent in nominal wages, is to be filled, seems to be a mystery. (The fact that Soviet citizens may be impolite enough to ask the same question—of course only in their thoughts—may be the reason why the target for nominal wages was deleted from the published version of Khrushchev's speech.)

The real income of the peasants is to grow 'by not less than 40 per cent'. Here the target is tied to a very uncertain item, the scheduled doubling in output per man in the collective farms; so the peasants have not much ground for rejoicing.

TO return now to the consumption fund. The provisions, stated or implied, of the Control Figures for the rise in real incomes and in the number of working persons (the official provisions for real incomes are calculated per working person) imply a total rise in personal incomes of about 62 per cent. The costs of administration have been rising only negligibly in real terms in recent years, and are not expected to increase much in the future. Thus the two items, personal incomes in real terms, which in this form include the benefits from social insurance, education and health services, and the expenditure on administration, are scheduled to increase by less than the 60-63 per cent which is the planned increase in the consumption fund. But except for real personal incomes in this sense and the expenses on administration, the consumption fund contains nothing but defence expenditure. A growth in this expenditure by somewhat more than 60-63 per cent is consequently foreseen by the Control Figures. (The contradiction between this enormous increase in military expenditure and Khrushchev's incessant assurances of his peaceful intentions is too striking to need any further comment.) This huge provision for military needs may, it is true, have been put in only as a safety measure. If actual military needs turn out to be smaller, the other allocation items of the national income (investment and personal incomes) may be boosted.

Since national income is scheduled to rise by 62-65 per cent, while the consumption fund is to grow by 60-63 per cent, the accumulation fund is planned to be enlarged more than national income, indeed by about 70 per cent. The bulk of this fund consists of net investment, so that it must be assumed that net investment too is scheduled to grow at a greater rate than national income, possibly even greater than the total accumulation fund. Another great Stalin tradition, namely that an ever growing proportion of the national income goes into investment, will consequently be upheld.

There is of course a great difference, with respect to the planned enlargement of the national income and its components, between the Control Figures for 1959-65 and the earlier years of the industrialisation drive. Then the expansion of investment was attained by keeping personal incomes at levels greatly below those prevailing prior to the drive. Now the great accumulated potential permits Stalin's tradition to be upheld (or is it another of those 'laws of the even development of the socialist economy according to plan'?) with a simultaneous and not unsubstantial growth in personal incomes.

PETER WILES, having presented an appraisal of the Soviet five-year plans which he believed to have been mine, continued: 'This view leans too heavily on the chaotic and experimental prewar period in the USSR'.[4] Rightly impressed by Soviet economic growth, he apparently connects this with planning. This writer is also greatly impressed by the high rates of Soviet economic growth, but believes that Soviet middle-range and long-range planning is largely a mess, and wonders how it is that the poor state of planning does not affect that growth more adversely than it apparently does.

Wiles' paper was published (June 1957) after the rate of Soviet industrial growth had already slowed down for the absurd reason that for years, probably since 1950 but certainly since 1951, many more investment projects were started than could be completed within a reason-

[4] *Oxford Economic Papers*, New Series, 9, No. 2, p. 255.

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able time. As a result, the completion of investment projects was highly inadequate, and the resulting inadequate capacities caused a reduction in the rates of growth of output. Steel output increased by 9·4 per cent in 1955, by 7·3 per cent in 1956, and by 4·9 per cent in 1957. The insufficient expansion of steel output adversely affected the output of machinery, which accounts for close on 40 per cent of total Soviet industrial output. The underfulfilment of targets for machinery unfavourably affected the operation of other industries and other sectors of the economy. This is a really startling phenomenon—a dictatorship of unheard of severity apparently unable to control the operations of its own ministries, located right there in Moscow. These ministries included the excessive constructions in their plans, and Gosplan proved unable to straighten the matter out in preparing the final plans.

When Wiles wrote, nearly a year and a half had passed since the 20th Party Congress adopted the most unimaginative and most absurd of the five-year plans, namely the Directives on the sixth five-year plan. It was a hurriedly produced document based on old ideas which had for some time been largely obsolete. Only two and a half years of the prospective operating time passed, and a large number of important items in the sixth FYP were said to be harmful and were thereupon discarded, both before and after the Directives themselves were scrapped. The good features in the new seven-year plan are to be found in the first place in those parts where it breaks away from the Directives.

To take some examples: Fuel is the foundation of a modern economy. The sixth FYP was based on the continued dominance of coal, most of which is quite expensive to produce in the USSR. The rate of growth provided in the Directives for crude petroleum was only moderately larger than that for coal, while the existence of huge gas resources, very cheap to exploit, had apparently not yet been really discovered by those in power.

Artificial fibres are much cheaper to produce in the USSR than cotton, especially if the requisite large investment in artificial irrigation needed for cotton growing is considered. The Directives on the sixth FYP were calculated to perpetuate the almost complete domination of cotton as material for fabrics.

Investment is the implement of economic progress. Allegedly in conformity with Marx, no interest is charged in the USSR on the invested capital in calculating production costs. Selection among competing investment projects was made with no regard, or at any rate with wholly insufficient regard, for the differences in the amount of investment capital needed. In these conditions those projects appeared the most profitable which involved large fixed investment but small running costs. The most outstanding example of such projects is hydroelectric power. Soviet Russia proudly embarked on hydroelectric projects at sites so unfavourable that no thought would have been given to them in the rich United States. It was an irony of fate, or the height of thoughtlessness, as one prefers, that the sixth FYP decided on the construction of a huge electric power plant at Saratov, where the natural conditions are unsuitable and there are immense untapped resources of cheap gas nearby. The rate of growth provided in the sixth FYP for hydroelectric power expansion was more than double that for fuel-burning electricity plants.

Since the Directives on the sixth FYP were issued, the Soviet fuel balance has been completely overturned, crude petroleum and especially gas largely replacing coal. Indeed, after finally 'discovering' gas, they are embarking at such breakneck speed on developing it that there are bound to be errors in selecting sites, excessive construction costs, etc. According to the Control Figures for 1959-65, gas output is to increase five-fold from 1958 to 1965, after growing, between 1955 and 1958, at much greater rates than were provided in the sixth FYP Directives. Investment in gas installations is to rise 4·2-fold from 1952-58 to 1959-65, while investment in the coal industry is granted an increase of only 22-27 per cent.

The order on the accelerated expansion of the chemical industry, mentioned earlier, spelled out the burial of the targets set in the sixth FYP Directives so far as the composition of the different fabrics to be produced was concerned. The output of fabrics from artificial

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fibres and from mixtures of artificial and natural fibres is to grow much more rapidly than was contemplated in the Directives.

The bewitchment exercised by hydroelectric power, which really dates back to Lenin and was in full evidence in the sixth FYP Directives, has also disappeared. The fifteen-year plan for the development of electric power, adopted as recently as 1956 or 1957, has been scrapped. Not only were the hydroelectric plants planned but not yet begun, abandoned, but the construction of some plants already started has been discontinued permanently or temporarily. Among those where construction has been halted is the huge plant at Krasnoyarsk, possibly the cheapest plant to construct (per kw. of capacity). This seems senseless. The Control Figures for 1959-65 provide investment funds for the construction of hydroelectric plants during the plan period only half as large as was spent on them in the preceding seven years, in spite of the fact that a number of huge hydroelectric plants were already in an advanced stage of construction in 1958. The previous enthusiasm for hydroelectric power has been diverted to fuel-burning plants, mainly those burning gas and petroleum, as well as cheap opencast coal. Investment in fuel-burning plants in 1959-65 is to be two and a half times as great as in 1952-58. Again, can such a transformation, occurring moreover in a matter of weeks, be accomplished without serious errors and unnecessary costs?

FOR a middle-range plan to be scrapped after it had actually started operating is unique in the history of Soviet planning; never have so many parts of a FYP become dead letters shortly after its adoption as in the case of the sixth FYP. The starting of an excessive number of investment projects and the Directives on the sixth FYP were not the only great blunders of the post-Stalin era on the planning front. In May 1955 Gosplan USSR was split into two organisations: one for long-range planning (five-year and still longer plans), the other for short-range (annual and quarterly) plans; the plenary session of the Party CC in December 1956 greatly expanded the functions of the latter body. Not only was this absurd measure scrapped within a few weeks or months (the two planning organisations were reunited in May 1957), but in future there will be no annual plans—at least so we are assured.

The first, second, and possibly some other FYP's contained breakdowns by years for their most important targets, but never before have annual plans been based on the respective annual segments of the current FYP. The new seven-year plan is said to contain annual segments for all its targets, and these are indeed expected to operate in the respective years, with any revisions made necessary by the passage of time. The new plan has even been described in the Soviet press as a combination of seven annual plans.

With the sad experience of the sixth FYP in the minds of those who are using their minds for the proper purpose, it seems fantastic to produce hurried plans for such distant years as 1964 or 1965 (the plan really has been produced in a hurry; some of its new features, such as the cooling off towards hydroelectric power, the greatly accelerated expansion of artificial fibre output, etc., were not decided on before the spring or summer of 1958) and expect them to operate with only minor adjustments after six or seven years. But of course there will be nothing to prevent the production in due course of new annual plans for the subsequent years which will then be called revised annual segments of the seven-year plan.

It adds to the unfavourable impression made by the Control Figures for 1959-65 that, after the annual segments had been proclaimed as the essence of the new planning, no trace of them can be found in Khrushchev's *Theses*. The document on the new middle-range plan as laid down in the *Theses* differs from its predecessors only in containing more verbiage and propaganda.

One innovation in the Control Figures is that some targets (their selection was made without real thought) are expressed in the form of ranges. This, if properly handled, may be regarded as an improvement. Most ranges are, however, so narrow as to look comical. The target for fixed investment by the state, for example, is a growth of 81-84 per cent from 1952-58 to 1959-65. Is 81 per cent the minimum and 84 per cent the maximum in this

(*Continued on page 68*)

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THE ECONOMICS OF DECENTRALISATION*

Peter Wiles

WHAT is meant by the decentralisation of a planned economy? How can it remain planned at all if it is decentralised? The question is open to many misunderstandings and we must first set out all the alternative methods of decentralisation at present mooted or in use. First we speak of the state's economic machine and then of the Party's.

As regards the state there are four kinds of polarity involved :

I. *Functionalism versus line management:* This is the ancient distinction known in Western business textbooks: What is the relation between the specialist adviser of the boss at higher echelon, who corresponds to a military *staff* officer, to his opposite number at lower echelon? Under pure functionalism he may give him actual orders without consulting either boss *i.e.* without going down the *line*. Certainly the worst possible solution, pure functionalism, was taken over uncritically by the USSR during its brief heyday in the West, and only finally abolished in 1934, principally by Kaganovich. Since then the same kind of sensible compromises ('line and staff') have obtained in the USSR as in the West. Either system, or any compromise, is compatible with any of the other polarities listed below; though functionalism, increasing as it does the number of channels *de haut en bas*, tends to go with centralisation.

II. *Production versus territorial:* Should the chain of command, whether weak or strong, whether 'line' or 'staff,' run from top to bottom through intermediate units defined according to what they produce or according to what areas they cover? In the West and, until recently, in the East, sensible compromise was the order of the day. Thus I.C.I. Ltd. manages most of its multifarious branches on the 'production' principle (detergents division, heavy chemicals division, etc.), but in one case it possesses a fully integrated, multi-product *kombinat* of contiguous factories. This is I.C.I. Billingham Division, and its headquarters is not in London but in Billingham. Thus I.C.I. operates on the compromise production-territorial principle, wrongly associated in Western Sovietology with Kaganovich and wrongly contrasted with functionalism. Kaganovich's speech at the 17th CPSU Congress in 1934 does not contain the word 'production-territorial,' and the concept only by implication. With *funktsionalka* (staff) he contrasted the recommended system of *yedinonachalie*. This meant 'one-man management,' *i.e.* it was effectually the Russian for 'line.'

THE contrast between production-territorial and functional produced by the 17th Congress in our minds—and possibly in Soviet minds—is bogus.[1] In fact the production-territorial compromise dates back to War Communism (1918-21), when the 'productional' Glavki (departments) of Vesenkha (the Supreme Council of National Economy) overlapped with the Guberniya (province) Sovnarkhozy (Councils of National Economy) of which the Vesenkha was formally but the Supreme Sovnarkhoz; these local Sovnarkhozy represented of course the 'territorial' principle. The balance between production and territorial principles was, it seems, amid a welter of conflicting organisations, approximately constant from 1917 to 1957, with perhaps a slight dip in favour of 'production' in 1930-35. Kaganovich seems to have had no strong views on this issue—he did not discuss it at all—and it was and remains almost wholly

* This is the second part of the paper read by Mr. Wiles at the University of California conference last year. The first part appeared in *Soviet Survey, No. 26.*

[1] It may be due to a single sentence in Resolution on Organisational Questions (S8): 'Liquidate the functional system of organising all Soviet-economic apparatuses and re-construct them on the production-territorial principle, beginning at the lowest productive links and ending with People's Commissariats.' But the very next sentence re-establishes the balance: 'Take as basic organs of the People's Commissariats production—or production-territorial Chief Administrations, responsible for all aspects of a given field of work.'

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irrelevant to the destruction of functionalism. Thus in today's wholly territorial set-up the Gosplan *could* be divided into functional bureaux (labour, finance, etc.) with direct powers over similar bureaux in the Sovnarkhozy, just as was the case in the rather purely 'productional' system before 1934.

It is important to have a detailed view of the old compromise, which lasted untouched until 1957. Heavy industry and of course long distance transportation were run purely on the production principle, by Ministries in Moscow. Elements of territorialism began to creep in with agriculture, trade, and light industry. These had Union-Republican Ministries: the most important enterprises being under the All-Union ministry, the others under the Republican ones; while the All-Union ministry controlled its Republican opposite numbers in matters of 'planning,' but not in matters of 'operation,' whatever that might mean. 'Communal' economy (housing and municipal services) came under the local Soviets and so was completely territorial. Building was a glorious free-for-all, being practised by every one of the organisations mentioned above and by some specialist Ministries. Territorialism, moreover, meant subordination to the local political Soviet, and not to the parallel system of economic Soviets. (This latter is the unique feature of the Sovnarkhozy in the USSR, both under War Communism and now again under Khrushchev. It has not been imitated by the satellites and China, which are also introducing the territorial principle, but simply by subordinating more factories to the existing organs of local government.)

This compromise was made at a time when politics played no rôle in the matter. Consequently it was, with the exception of building, more rational than the new dogmatic scheme introduced by Khrushchev in 1957, which subjects industry and construction to new local bodies called, by a deliberate hark-back to the 'twenties, Sovnarkhozy. The central ministries in these branches of the economy are abolished. Territorialism is thus imposed on such entirely unsuitable activities as electricity generation and, partly, railways.

We have not space here more than to list—dogmatically—the positive and negative features of Khrushchev's reform. Most of the points speak for themselves without elaboration, but some can only be understood in the light of a generalisation: in a system where every enterprise, trust, Ministry or Sovnarkhoz is desperately trying to reach its plan targets and stretched thereby to the limits of technical capacity, subcontracting is deeply mistrusted. Better far to make it for yourself, and not rely on the unpunctual delivery dates, shoddy quality, and general cussedness of other economic authorities. Hence an enterprise likes to have its own building repair team, a Ministry its own whole construction outfit, its own machine-shops, etc. All this tends to autarky, and it makes not the smallest difference whether the set-up is on the production or the territorial principle—except that Sovnarkhozy, being less specialised and more difficult to control, will be better at achieving autarky. Not otherwise, indeed, is it with whole Communist states in international trade. The point is so obvious that one wonders if Khrushchev himself believes his claim that Sovnarkhozy are a solution to the autarky problem.

The gains and losses, then, are as follows:

Gain

Fewer long hauls from one plant in a ministry to another (*e.g.* of spare parts that might have been bought locally)—

Loss

Fewer long runs of production (as the large specialised market provided by a Ministry is split up);
Sovnarkhoz boundaries interrupt previously existing rational hauls.

Gain

Less Ministerial autarky—

Loss

The much stronger *capacity* for autarky among the many more Sovnarkhozy leads to much more autarky on balance.

Gain

Small construction greatly improved by being concentrated into one large local enterprise—

Loss

Large specialised construction suffers.

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Gain

Vertical integration encouraged—

Loss

Horizontal integration, including the technical co-operation of similar plants, discouraged; Technical progress suffers, and there is less standardisation.

Gain

New industry no longer concentrated in Moscow area by ministerial preference—

Loss

Sovnarkhozy of undevelopable areas push through crackpot schemes of their own.

Gain

Economies in local transport management—

Loss

Electricity generation and long-range transport more difficult to run.

This balance would be highly adverse to the reform did not the territorial system bring with it decentralisation and an increase in the rôle of money. This we must for the moment defer.

III. *Centralisation versus decentralisation:* Stalin personally was the lunatic centraliser. *All* the conflicting groups since Stalin's death have wanted to decentralise, but to whom? A centralised system could be 'functional' or 'line,' though functionalism requires at any rate some centralisation. It could be 'production' or 'territorial': though 'production' makes centralisation easier by locating the intermediate subordinate bodies in Moscow, it takes away as much as it gives by increasing the distance between these bodies and the enterprises. That is, the independence of the enterprise is diminished by the territorial principle, and that of the intermediate administrative unit increased. The increase in enterprise independence now going on, for which Khrushchev is taking credit, is due not at all to the territorial principle but to the reduction in the number of central planning directives—a reduction that began when Stalin died.

Certainly a 'production' system can be decentralised even at the top, simply by giving more power to the Ministers. This was the aim of the 'technocratic counter-revolution' of 25 December, 1956, when the top technocrats took over the *Gosekonomkomissiya* and subordinated the whole economy to it. This body, which had hitherto been no more powerful than the Gosplan, thus became a sort of economic Inner Cabinet; no Party apparatchik was a member of it. More rights were specifically promised to Ministers, thus demonstrating that Khrushchev with his territorial nostrum has no monopoly of decentralisation. Indeed he personally seems to want very rigid central control over the Sovnarkhozy.

Finally centralisation is, with some difficulty, compatible with a market system: *e.g.* in the Lange model of a Socialist economy, in which prices and even outputs are centrally fixed by one authority, but continually varied in response to consumer demand; and on the other hand power can be decentralised to bodies that still act arbitrarily without a market. This would simply reproduce inside a country the conditions of Communist international trade, the Ministries or Sovnarkhozy negotiating with each other as economic sovereigns; which would be the most chaotic and arbitrary way possible of allocating resources. (Hence the view strongly held in Poland: decentralisation demands more active money, and this demands more rational prices. It remains to be seen how far the new Soviet system falls into this trap.)

IV. *Market versus administration:* This polarity has already been discussed in the previous issue of *Soviet Survey*, and nothing more need be said here. Either of these arrangements is compatible with any of the others, but the market certainly goes better with decentralisation, and administration with its opposite.

V. Turning now to the Party, we find in Western books an almost greater confusion about 'functional' and 'production-territorial' than we do in the case of the State. There never was any production-territorial revolution in the Party, nor is there any ambiguity in the documents which might suggest it.

The party has always been basically territorial: it is a hierarchy of locally elected committees that elect regional committees, and so on, like any other party. This has never changed, and the whole controversy here has been about a smaller matter, the organisation of the Central Committee offices. Before 1934 these bureaux were divided functionally, much as the departments in

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the Ministries. In 1934, at the same time as he replaced functional with line management in the Ministries, Kaganovich replaced functional with productional bureaux in the Central Committee. Thus the 17th Congress resolution says:
'Reorganise the bureaux of the obkoms, kraikoms and Central Committee of the CPSU abolishing the present *functional* bureaux and founding instead of them *unitary* production-branch bureaux. In each production-branch bureau, for instance the agricultural bureau of the C.C., concentrate all the work of the given branch as a whole.' The Party issue in 1934, then, was different from the state issue, and may simply and truly be described as 'functional versus productional.' The Kaganovich solution was reversed by Zhdanov in 1939, and re-imposed by Malenkov in 1948. Neither of these, however, touched the production-territorial compromise in the structure of the State.

THE issue really was the extent to which party and state organisations should coincide. Kaganovich and Malenkov—who both in 1957 turn up as supporters of a certain independence for the state—remoulded the party to fit the state, though the basic territorial structure of the party was too much for them and they could only change the bureaux of the Central Committee. They most probably never dreamed of creating a Communist Party of the Oil Industry, and abolishing the Communist Party of Azerbaijan. Zhdanov on the other hand—a strong party man—restored temporarily a system of Central Committee bureaux cutting across state lines. He also, incidentally, tried to keep the party out of micro-economic questions; there is much emphasis on this in his speech and in the resolutions at the 18th Congress.

Khrushchev is consciously the follower of Zhdanov in all fields, and a party man *à outrance*. Pushing territorialism to insane lengths, he has tried to remould the state on party lines. In particular and most significantly, he rejected the geographers' demands for large regional Sovnarkhozy and made them of essentially the same size as the existing local government units (oblasti). *Hence he has parcelled out industry and construction*[2] *among the party oblast committee secretaries:* no wonder he had their votes at the crucial Central Committee meetings in 1957, when he defeated Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich and the technocrats. No economic reason was offered at the time for such small Sovnarkhozy, though one may say that by chance the scheme is not a bad one: such small units cannot seriously aim at complete autarky, as larger ones would have done. The geographers' regionalism, with its implied autarky, would have been disastrous. The Sovnarkhoz *conception* is untainted with regionalism or with neglect of the division of labour. In theory it is a mere administrative device.

But the 'obkoms hand-out' makes for headaches. There are 102 Sovnarkhozy as opposed to the 27 economic Ministries abolished. In order to control them Gosplan must be greatly strengthened. *Its departments are still divided on the production, not the territorial, principle:* a technical inevitability, since *someone* in the USSR has to bother about how much steel is produced, instead of the volume of all industrial production in Kiev. These departments are then accused of being 'the ghosts of the old Ministries, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof.' The Gostekhnika (State Committee on Technology) also must work on the production principle, since that is how technical collaboration must run, by its very nature. The intermediate class of 'planned' commodities,[3] which under the old dispensation could safely be left to the relevant Ministries to distribute, cannot be left to the unspecialised Sovnarkhozy. The Gosplan must take them over, thus actually increasing the degree of centralisation. The production principle is dead, but technology forbids it to lie down.

So the territorial principle as applied favours the Party all along the line. It brings the state's structure into line with its own; it abolishes the principal officials of the state, the ministers, and leaves no state officials more powerful than the obkom secretaries; and it removes the scattered remnants of the state machine (with the very great exception of Gosplan) from the fleshpots of Moscow. Thus the new managerial

[2] Note that it is only industry and construction: the rest of the economy was pretty well on the territorial system already. Communal economy continues under the local Soviets, and agriculture is now under them too, though its Ministries persist, in a supervisory rôle.

[3] The most important were 'funded,' *i.e.* centrally allocated by Gosplan. For the least important, the 'decentralised,' local bodies were responsible.

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Establishment is broken; and the climate of the capital is governed by the more dynamic ideologues of the Central Committee bureaux. In the face of such political advantages, why bother if the balance of economic pros and cons goes the other way?

VI. But how about the Party's attitude to decentralisation and the market? Here ideology is definite, and the sacred canon horribly explicit. The party must oppose them both. But can it successfully do so, and, ideology apart, what are its interests?

On decentralisation clearly the obkom secretaries oppose the Gosplan and the Central Committee *apparat*. There is no unity of interest here within the Party. But the consequences of decentralised administrative allocation are evidently disastrous, as we have seen. So evidently that we must ascribe to the Soviet rulers at least that much economic rationality, and believe they will never permit the obkoms or Sovnarkhozy serious economic independence *without a free market.*

On this latter no prophecy can possibly be made. But many forces pull in the direction of the free market:

(a) the vast number of Sovnarkhozy; difficult to administer from one centre, and doubtless forced into secret deals behind Gosplan's back. When such powerful bodies enter the black market it is almost better legitimised;

(b) the fact that only thus can decentralisation go further: a policy not only satisfying local party bosses but also the one important class of state official the party cannot get rid of—the factory managers;

(c) the rapidly rising demand for economic rationality on the part of economists, factory managers and subordinate investment planners;

(d) the Polish and Yugoslav examples. Here it may be noted that Khrushchev's whole idea of central planning on the territorial principle is a sort of *ersatz* Titoism. For Yugoslav industry is also administered territorially, but on a free market;

(e) the party's hostility to bureaucrats and its desire to cut down the state.[4] Most of the state's economic machine, including the administrators at factory level who have to answer its letters, is simply a substitute for the market;

(f) moreover technicians are scarce, and the people who must conduct all this correspondence, both at the enterprise and at the centre, require technical training. If technicians' time is to be spent in operative management the centre and its detailed instructions must be abolished;

(g) the party's purity and dynamism are threatened if, the state having been reduced, it must itself attend to micro-economic administration. The state bureaucracy will then reproduce itself *inside* the party, with very corrupting consequences; as Zhdanov foresaw;

(h) the rôle of money is enhanced by the territorial principle. A Ministry, dealing with a single commodity, could think *in natura*. The multi-product Sovnarkhoz, however, is at every point comparing one commodity with another.

Will these considerations triumph over dogma? It is extremely hard to say, and by no means certain that the West would gain anything politically from such a triumph.

AGRICULTURE requires separate but brief treatment. Its problems are many and most of them are irrelevant. What concerns us here is the extreme complication and instability of the planning hierarchy in this sector, and the survival of free-market elements. In 1954 Khrushchev sharply reduced the powers of Gosplan and the All-Union Ministries, in favour of Republican Ministries, local Soviets, and local Gosplan organs (a Russian Republic ministry had to be practically created). Many decisions were decentralised all the way down to the kolkhozy themselves. In 1955 he was strengthening the MTS in every way, and still further reducing the planning powers of Gosplan and the Ministries of Agriculture. By a decree published on 11 March, the kolkhoz was to receive only the most general directives from the centre, and then, under MTS tutelage, draw up an exact plan (the MTS tutelage at this point was an innovation). The plan was subject to local government confirmation. The MTS, so recently promoted,

[4] Apparently the obvious step has not been taken in connection with cutting down the bureaucracy of claiming that the state is withering away. Perhaps this would be too obvious Titoism. The East German advocates of the free market, Behrens and Benary, brought this point into the open in 1956, and it certainly did not help them with Comrade Ulbricht. Cf. *Wirtschaftswissenschaft*, 3 Sonderheft, E. Berlin, 1957; *SBZ-Archiv*, Bonn, 10 June, 1957.

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have now dropped out (decree of 31 March, 1958), and only the various local government organs remain; they have apparently regained all the ground lost in 1953. Meanwhile the Party has throughout played a rôle so decisive as to render all these changes rather nugatory: notoriously the Party governs much more directly in agriculture than in industry or other branches. But the Party hierarchy also has been changed several times, the weight shifting from county (rai) committee to MTS to kolkhoz successively.

These frequent shifts of the power to decide the cropping plan can only strengthen kolkhoz independence, which will further benefit by the declaration that co-operative property is nearly as good as state property and that kolkhozy can develop as such into full communism; and by the continual strengthening of the party cells in the kolkhozy. At the same time the agricultural market was never wholly unfree, and the continued raising of compulsory delivery prices diminishes such elements of administrative force as there are. Then, too, the mere existence of separate MTS meant state regulation of the conditions on which ploughing could be carried out; and all this now falls to the ground, while kolkhozy, possessed of tractors, gain still further in prestige.

So the kolkhozy want a free market, and are near to getting it.[5] This would infect the relationship between Sovkhozy and their Ministry, and the producers of fertilizers and new agricultural machinery would also have to supply on free market principles. To some extent, of course, fertilizers have always been sold on such principles. Thus the market threatens to reach back into the nationalised sector. It is again impossible to say whether this threat will materialise, or how it would be met.[6]

[5] Since this was written compulsory deliveries were abolished.

[6] The 'nationalisation' of the kolkhoz indivisible fund (the part ploughed back into new fixed capital) is, as this is revised, a partial answer to these free market tendencies. But it is unclear what this nationalisation means.

(*Continued from page 62*)

range? Are the 3 percentage points all the leeway likely to be involved in investment over a period of seven years (remembering that the 1957 plan foresaw an expansion of freight transports by 5 per cent whereas the actual growth turned out equal to 13 per cent)?

Soviet long-range planning is mediocre in quality.[5] It bears particularly strongly the imprint of Nikita Khrushchev, produced by a combination of good decisions and blunders, of wisdom and stupidity, and in all cases of immaturity. Khrushchev and five or seven year plans are just incompatible. The Soviets go out of their way to emphasise the 20th Party congress as a great milestone on the road to communism. As far as economic planning is concerned, that congress was the summit of absurdity. Much in and around the new seven-year plan is also mediocre; in particular the manner of handling its annual breakdown may turn out of this calibre.

The high rates of growth exist in the Soviet economy, and in the provisions of the seven-year plan. The last thing this writer wishes is for these rates to be disregarded because of the poor planning. They are much more important than the planning defects.

Postscript. Subsequent enquiry suggests that the shortage of gainfully active workers may be an even greater handicap to the fulfilment of the seven-year plan targets than is implied in this discussion.

[5] An important example of slipshod planning in the Control Figures: Khrushchev's *Theses,* his report to the plenary session of the central committee on 14 December 1958 (*Pravda,* 15 *December* 1958), and the resolution on this report (*Pravda,* 20 *December* 1958), all refer specifically to a decline in private farming by kolkhoz peasants and workers on state farms. Even the complete liquidation of their milk production seems likely. Yet three of the Control Figure targets, namely, to increase the number of cows by 50 per cent, to raise the yield from kolkhoz cows to 2,600 litres a year, and to expand the total milk output by 70-80 per cent, all, taken together, imply *an increase* in privately owned cows.

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SOVIET MARXISM: FROM THEORY TO IDEOLOGY

*Some later Patristic Writings**

George Lichtheim

CRITICISM proceeds by way of defining its object and rendering explicit those 'internal contradictions' which not only Hegel regarded as being inherent in reality. The critique of Soviet Marxism—viewed as a totality of social relations, and standardised thought about these relations—starts from the recognition that there really is such a thing, *i.e.*, that Soviet reality is to be understood in terms of Leninist-Stalinist doctrine, and vice versa. Such criticism does not, in the manner of a growing army of dilettantes, posit an incomprehensible ideology imposed on an uncomprehending mass of passive human beings; instead it enquires how Soviet society came to assume a shape which turns Marxism from a *theory* of history into the *ideology* of a ruling caste convinced that it has got history under control. From this point onward, the facts to be examined fall into place, and even the weirdest manifestations of official imbecility or hysteria—such as the recent outcry over Pasternak—cease to be baffling or mysterious. They fit into the logic of a system equipped with an officially manufactured 'false consciousness,' a consciousness at odds with observable facts: notably the fact that—by its own constantly proclaimed standards—the USSR is not a socialist society.

A recurrent emphasis upon this tension between appearance and reality is among the merits of Herbert Marcuse's recently published study, *Soviet Marxism* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958). True, the author has been blamed for injecting a certain amount of qualified apologia into his critical analysis of Stalinism. His emphasis upon the theme of co-existence does indeed blend here and there into a discreet advocacy of Soviet views, notably in the political field, where he is clearly an amateur. Fortunately he is much sounder where his own speciality is engaged. It is useful to have it on his authority, as a Marxist in the straight line of descent from Hegel, that

> 'In the Soviet system, the "general interest" is hypostatised in the state—an entity separate from the individual interests. To the extent that the latter are still unfulfilled and repelled by reality, they strive for ideological expression; and their force is the more explosive to the régime the more the new economic basis is propagandised as insuring the total liberation of man under communism. The fight against ideological transcendence thus becomes a life-and-death struggle for the régime. Within the ideological sphere, the centre of gravity shifts from philosophy to literature and art. The danger zone of *philosophical* transcendence has been brought under control through the absorption of philosophy into the official theory. Metaphysics, traditionally the chief refuge for the still unrealised ideals of human freedom and fulfilment, is declared to be totally superseded by dialectical materialism and by the emergence of a rational society in socialism. Ethical philosophy, transformed into a pragmatic system of rules and standards, has become an integral part of state policy' (pp. 127-8).

THE fate of philosophy under such a system can easily be imagined. Before entering upon this subject, let us note the author's view that an implicit commitment to the *status quo* is the real secret of 'socialist realism' (a doctrine to which a notable contribution has been made by Georg Lukacs, current assertions to the contrary notwithstanding). The trouble with this pseudo-realism is not its stress on commitment *per se*, but the fact that (in Mr Marcuse's words) it 'goes beyond the artistic implementation of political norms by accepting the established social reality as the final framework for the artistic content, transcending it neither in style

*The following essay deals briefly with some recent literature on Soviet philosophy, along lines which the author intends to develop more fully in a book-length study now in preparation.

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nor in substance.' Genuine conflict is ruled out. Yet

> '. . . it is precisely the catastrophic element inherent in the conflict between man's essence and his existence that has been the centre toward which art has gravitated since its secession from ritual. The artistic images have preserved the determinate negation of the established reality—ultimate freedom. When Soviet aesthetics attacks the notion of the "insurmountable antagonism between essence and existence" as the theoretical principle of "formalism," it thereby attacks the principle of art itself' (p. 130).

It was time this was said by a Marxist, and for the sake of it the present writer for one is prepared to forgive Professor Marcuse some of his less felicitous utterances. The Professor is equally enlightening (up to a point) on the more technical aspects of Soviet philosophy. Having noted some of the vicissitudes which the dialectic has undergone since it became the instrument of Leninism, he observes:

> '. . . while not a single of the basic dialectical concepts has been revised or rejected in Soviet Marxism, the function of the dialectic itself has undergone a significant change: it has been transformed from a mode of critical thought into a universal "world outlook" and universal method with rigidly fixed rules and regulations, and this transformation destroys the dialectic more thoroughly than any revision. The change corresponds to that of Marxism itself from theory to ideology; dialectic is vested with the magical qualities of official thought and communication. As Marxian theory ceases to be the organon of revolutionary consciousness and practice, and enters the superstructure of an established system of domination, the movement of dialectical thought is codified into a philosophical system' (p. 137).

The last sentence establishes Professor Marcuse as the direct inheritor of a tradition inaugurated by the early, pre-Leninist, Lukacs, and even more so by the German Marxist philosopher, Karl Korsch,[1] who (unlike Lukacs) went the whole distance in rejecting Leninism (not to mention Stalinism) as the ideology of a new class society. The awkward part of this argument is that it fails to account for the rôle which Engels' theories played in the history of the Social-Democratic movement. It is all very well for Professor Marcuse to protest against the 'Soviet Marxist hypostatisation of dialectic into a scientific world outlook,' on the grounds that the division of Marxian theory into dialectical and historical materialism 'would have been meaningless to Marx, for whom dialectical materialism was synonymous with historical materialism' (pp. 144-5). But after all the principal culprit in the matter was Engels, followed at a brief remove by Karl Kautsky and G. V. Plekhanov, the two leading theorists of Social-Democracy during the pre-1914 period. It was from them that Lenin inherited the notion of a Marxian *Weltanschauung* embracing nature and history. It simply will not do to blame everything on the notorious Russian backwardness in philosophy. What about the cultural backwardness of the labour movement? Did this movement turn so readily to Engels' travesty of Marx because it required an integrative ideology to take the place of lost religious certitudes? And what of Engels himself, with his marked reliance upon the positivist and scientist currents of his age? For the existentialist wing of neo-Marxism, Engels is rapidly becoming the villain of the piece, and not without cause;[2] but if 'dialectical materialism' is to be discarded, it must be done on philosophical grounds, and not for the curious reason that it corresponds to a particular political situation. Once this is conceded the case against *Diamat* becomes fairly simple—unless one chooses to assert, with some neo-Thomists, that the 'positive' aspects of Leninism can be incorporated into the traditional Aristotelian-scholastic world view.

BEFORE turning to this startling assertion, it may be pertinent to cite the opinion of a writer who shares some of Professor Marcuse's views on Soviet Marxism, but is distinguished by even greater tolerance for its aims and methods:

'The actual reason for the Marxist, and even

[1] See the latter's *Marxismus und Philosophie* (Leipzig, 1930), passim.

[2] See Iring Fetscher, 'Der Marxismus im Spiegel der franzoesischen Philosophie,' in *Marxismusstudien*, Vol. I, (Tuebingen, 1954).

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> the Hegelian, interest in dialectics in general (as distinct from a helpful generalisation in studying transformations of society), was the quest for a "world-outlook," *i.e.*, for a scientific substitute for the religious myths. All philosophy has originated from such a quest, whether it was politically compromising like the Hegelian . . . or else politically radical like the Marxist' . . . .[3]

If 'all philosophy' has originated from a quest for a non-theological world view, it is difficult to understand why the philosophers have been so slow in coming up with the dialectic. But the validity of Dr Schlesinger's assertion is less relevant in our present context than his evident reluctance to abandon *Diamat* to its neo-Hegelian critics (who have always been numerous, but never politically influential). The truth seems to be that no mass movement can do without an integrationist ideology. In this respect the Marxist critics of *Diamat* are somewhat in the position of the modern existentialist theologians: they may have reason, and even Scripture, on their side, but one doubts whether they are going to make an impact on the hierarchy. Bureaucracies have an infallible instinct for the realities of power and the emotional requirements of simple-minded adherents who need more certainty than existentialism can give them. It is the intellectuals who toy with the concept of absolute freedom; the ordinary person, not unreasonably, requires a few unchallenged certitudes.

FOR obvious reasons, none of these problems arises for Professor Wetter, an Austrian Jesuit and the author of a massive critical history of Soviet philosophy, now at last translated into English.[4] While fully persuaded that 'in present-day Soviet philosophy there is very little left of real dialectics, and that it consists rather of a materialistic evolutionism, decked out in dialectical terminology' (Preface, p. xi), he sees no reason to lament this development. If in current Soviet philosophy 'the individual categories have again taken on the values they had in the pre-individualist scheme of things, which ultimately goes back to Aristotle,' and if in consequence 'Soviet philosophy has come to share a common pattern of concepts with the Aristotelian and scholastic tradition' (*ibid.*), that clearly is all to the good. Not that Professor Wetter rates the chances of ideological co-existence very high. In the concluding chapter, stress is laid on 'the nature of Communism as a perversion of Christianity and a counter-church,' whose anti-religious prepossessions constitute an unbridgeable obstacle to contact or co-operation. Or again, '. . . that of all the historical forms of Christianity it should prove to be Catholicism which exhibits the largest number of formal similarities with Bolshevism, albeit with the signs reversed, is perhaps an indication that, on the other side, the opposition between Bolshevism and the Catholic Church is also the most radical of all' (*ibid.* p. 560). But these reflections relate to the phenomenology of Russian Communism rather than to the theoretical structure of Soviet Marxism. It is the latter with which the author is professionally concerned, and here the verdict is in some respects remarkably favourable.

> 'One of the most surprising things that our exposition of the Soviet philosophical system has revealed to us is the existence of a very wide-ranging correspondence between certain fundamental categories of thought and lines of enquiry in Soviet philosophy on the one hand, and those of Scholasticism, or even Thomism, on the other. We think it no exaggeration to maintain that dialectical materialism, in its present-day official Soviet form, bears a far greater resemblance to the *formamentis* of Scholasticism than to that of Hegelian dialectics, notwithstanding the presence of certain Hegelian concepts and expressions which are still adhered to, though robbed by the "materialist inversion" of their idealistic meaning, and accorded an interpretation which is simply that appropriate to ordinary commonsense. Indeed, the curse put upon the dialectic by its transference to the realm of Nature, like the special meanings attached to the Stalinist categories of "possibility" and "actuality," are directly responsible for the fact that in

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[3] Rudolf Schlesinger, *Marx, His Time And Ours* (London, 1950), p. 14.

[4] Gustav A. Wetter, *Dialectical Materialism. A Historical and Systematic Survey of Philosophy in the Soviet Union* (London, 1958).

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contemporary Soviet dialectical materialism we find ourselves dealing with a mode of thought that is internally far more akin to the Aristotelian and Scholastic doctrines of act and potency than to the true Hegelian dialectic' (pp. 55-56).

The clue to this remarkable passage—doubly remarkable in a lecturer at the Papal Oriental Institute in Rome—lies in the author's undisguised hostility to Hegel, and indeed to the entire German Idealist tradition, of which Marxism, in one of its aspects, is the heir. Wetter is at one with his fellow-Thomists in regarding Hegel's philosophy as a dangerous spiritualist fallacy, and this is why in his eyes 'the curse put upon the dialectic by its transference to the realm of Nature' is really a blessing in disguise: philosophically it may be nonsense, since a dialectic embedded in nature is an absurdity—on this point Wetter is in full agreement with the neo-Hegelian Marxists, not to mention their existentialist successors—but this is all the more reason to welcome the trend. What matters is that Soviet philosophy should retain the 'realist' theory of knowledge to which Lenin wrongly gave the label 'materialism'; once this is assured, the Soviet theorists will be driven by the logic of their system towards fuller acceptance of the Aristotelian categories implicit in their epistemology.

IT is true that this still leaves untouched the crucial difficulty of Soviet atheism—the real reason, in Wetter's opinion, why Lenin insisted on describing his theory of knowledge as 'materialist,' instead of contenting himself with the harmless (and philosophically accurate) term 'realist.' Here no understanding is possible. But meanwhile something is gained by establishing those 'formal resemblances' between Leninism and Thomism which are inherent in their joint repudiation of the idealist (in the Kantian-Hegelian sense of the term) approach, and it is precisely to this aim that a large part of Wetter's enormously learned and systematic analysis of Soviet philosophy is explicitly addressed.

This interpretation has not remained unchallenged. Wetter himself is obliged to qualify it, inasmuch as he notes Lenin's enthusiasm for Hegel's dialectic, and the tradition, reaching back to the early nineteenth century, of a pre-Marxist cult of Hegel among Russian intellectuals.[5] Nonetheless his carefully balanced account of the present situation in Soviet philosophy leaves the impression that he is hopeful of a gradual extrusion of the dialectic from the official system. Since this evaluation is backed by a quite extraordinary display of erudition and what looks like comprehensive knowledge of intellectual developments in all fields of Soviet science, it cannot be lightly dismissed. Given the inherent absurdity of *Diamat* as presently taught, it is at least conceivable that the future belongs to a synthesis in which the dialectic (*i.e.* history) has been finally swallowed up by materialism (*i.e.* nature).

One may indeed conjecture that most Soviet scientists would welcome such a change. By contrast, it seems improbable that the Party authorities will freely consent to a philosophical revolution which would signalise their own abdication. The present arrangement, with all its intellectual absurdities, suits them, inasmuch as it validates their authority as the spokesmen of doctrine, and therefore the ultimate controllers over all spheres of thought. This control would certainly be endangered if Soviet philosophy came to be taught in an unambiguous form requiring no interpretation by the Party authorities. The latter are currently the guardians of an orthodoxy that lays down the lines of future advance, which is why it is possible for them to censor new scientific developments in the name of philosophy, while denouncing modern philosophy in the name of science. The resulting ambiguity has its roots in the 'dialectical materialism' constructed by Engels,[6] but the determination to employ *Diamat* in the fashion just described springs from non-theoretical considerations. If Soviet Marxism is to maintain its controlling function it cannot renounce the claim to represent a systematic world-view superior to that of positive science. As a

[5] Wetter, *ibid.*, p. 553, where he likewise notes 'a surprising resemblance' between the Leninist concept of *partiinost* and the 'basic idea of Slavophile thought, the doctrine of "total knowledge."' For the Slavophils too, cognition was not simply a theoretical affair: it had an existential significance.

[6] The term itself goes back to Plekhanov. It is significant that the 'father of Russian Marxism' was the first to systematise that part of the Marxian inheritance which could be turned into a materialist *Weltanschauung*.

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Thomist, Wetter is well placed to understand why this is so, and indeed he regards the anti-positivist attitude of Soviet Marxism, *i.e.* its commitment to an over-arching philosophy, as a sign of spiritual health.[7] It is possible to feel, however, that he overrates the prospects of a Soviet ontology from which the dialectic has been expelled in favour of an all-inclusive realism (in the Aristotelian sense of the term). At any rate the Communist Party would have to become considerably more conservative—though perhaps not quite as conservative as Wetter's own Church—before it gave its sanction to such an innovation; conversely, Soviet society in general would have to become a good deal more liberal, *i.e.* non-totalitarian, for the positive sciences to emancipate themselves from *any* kind of officially controlled Party philosophy. In principle, of course, both developments are possible, but the former is perhaps somewhat less improbable.

IT is not un-typical that the whole discussion has reached the Anglo-American world with a lag of between five and ten years. In Germany, France and Italy, it has been going on continuously since at least 1948 (incidentally the date of appearance of Wetter's Italian-language study on the subject, *Il materialismo dialettico Sovietico*, Turin, 1948). In some respects indeed the current argument represents a revival of an earlier ferment, provoked in part by the publication of some of Marx's pre-1848 writings, in the late 'twenties and early 'thirties. The post-war period has, however, introduced a distinctive new feature, in that neo-Marxism and neo-Hegelianism have formed an uneasy alliance with Existentialism. For obvious reasons this tendency has been most marked in France, but Germany and Italy have not remained unaffected. The cult of the late Antonio Gramsci among Italian Marxists (not all Communists) clearly owes something to this trend. In Germany, the chief beneficiaries so far, curiously enough, have been the theologians: the two volumes of *Marxismusstudien* published under the auspices of a study group set up by the Evangelical Church in Western Germany (Tuebingen, 1954-57) include some of the most incisive and scholarly work hitherto done on the subject, so that it is no exaggeration to say that German Protestant theologians must now be among the leading Marxologists in Europe.

In Britain and, so far as can be judged from a distance, in the United States, the discussion still follows the lines laid down in the 'thirties. The difference is perhaps best summarised by saying that in the English-speaking world, both defenders and critics of Marxism are concerned to eliminate the Hegelian element, while in Continental Europe neo-Marxism has become almost identical with neo-Hegelianism. Here it is the later positivist accretions—largely blamed on Engels—which are now seen as the chief impediment to the acceptance of Marxism *as a philosophy*. Soviet Marxism is likewise rejected, on the grounds of its obvious incompatibility with the philosophy of Hegel and the young Marx.[8] In all these respects, the writers in question—who are particularly numerous and influential in France—clearly stand at the opposite pole from a Thomist like Wetter, for whom the Hegelian dialectic represents the *damnosa hereditas* of the system.

It is not surprising that Wetter's massive study—like the earlier brief compendium by I. M. Bochenski (*Der Sowjetrussische Dialektische Materialismus*, Munich, 1950)—has suffered attacks from these quarters, the sharpest criticism coming from no less a personage than the Professor of Philosophy at the Philosophico-Theological High School in Regensburg, Jakob

[7] 'In this conception of philosophy, the Soviet philosophers make a definite break with that anti-philosophical attitude which is here and there encountered in Engels' (Wetter, *op. cit.*, pp. 251 sqq.). 'Whereas Engels, having driven philosophy out of Nature and history, had sought to restrict it to the realm of pure thought, "logic and dialectics," Soviet philosophy interprets the dialectic in the sense elsewhere conceded to it by Engels, namely as a "science of the general laws of motion and development of Nature, human society and thought." The result has been that in this way Nature and history have again been smuggled back into the jurisdiction of philosophy from which Engels wished to exclude them' (*ibid.*, p. 255). Wetter leaves no doubt that he regards this trend towards an all-embracing ontology as one of the most hopeful developments in Soviet thinking.

[8] For an elaboration of this point, see Fetscher, *loc. cit.*; also Merleau-Ponty, *Les Aventures de la Dialectique* (Paris, 1955); and last but not least the writings of Sartre. The latter, however, are so clearly outside the Marxist tradition that they cannot be included under the label of neo-Marxism, but should rather be regarded as an attempt to establish a bridge leading from Sartre's own version of Existentialism to Marxism as hitherto understood.

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Hommes,[9] himself a representative of the Heideggerian wing of Existentialism. The fascinating details of this controversy cannot be reported in this space; suffice it to say that Hommes had the misfortune of running counter to the considered views of his Parisian colleague Merleau-Ponty, whose own book appeared almost simultaneously and did much to undermine Hommes' interpretation of Soviet Marxism as a philosophy embodying the essence of Marx's 'Prometheian-metaphysical idea of freedom.' A reader of both works cannot fail to notice that Merleau-Ponty's more realistic assessment of Soviet Marxism as an ideology has something to do with his superior understanding of Communist Party strategy. He has been almost the first qualified critic in France to state bluntly that, however contradictory and even absurd 'dialectical materialism' may be as a philosophy, the Communist Party—whether in Russia or in France—cannot do without it, since it translates into philosophical terms the essential muddle in the heads of its adherents. Hence the futility of all attempts—*e.g.* that of Sartre—to replace it by an Existentialist doctrine of 'pure choice.' In Sartre's version of world history, from which the Hegelian dialectic has been expelled (though for reasons different from those of his Thomist opponents), the future lies open, and—so far from being 'necessary'—is brought into being by the creative act of the Communists, who freely determine their own activity and the shape of things to come. Whatever the strictly philosophical merits of this doctrine (which somehow sounds Cartesian rather than Marxist) it clearly does nothing to bolster the faith of the average *militant* who, if he cannot believe that history is working for him, is liable to lose heart. That Sartre should in all seriousness have tried to press this philosophy on the French Communist Party, as an improvement on Leninism, suggests a certain political innocence for which he has been duly taken to task both by the remaining Stalinist theoreticians in France and by his former friend and colleague Merleau-Ponty.[10]

ALTHOUGH these controversies in France and West Germany occurred for the most part in 1955-6, they are worth recalling for the light they shed on the current situation in Britain and America, where only the dimmest echo of this debate has hitherto penetrated (for the most part in the form of a somewhat scholastic dispute over certain Marxian texts dating back to his early, or Young Hegelian, period). Existentialism has as yet won no real hold over the Anglo-American public; if and when it does, we can expect to hear more about the incompatibility of Soviet Marxism with 'genuine' Hegelian Marxism *as a philosophy:* the latter qualification must be stressed because Marxism is of course more (and less) than a philosophy. Indeed it is arguable that to treat it as one is to discount its claim to represent a radical break in history. After all, what was wrong with philosophy, according to Marx, was its contemplative bent: it interpreted the world instead of changing it. Hence to say that Marxism can be regarded as a philosophy is to suggest that it has failed in its attempt to 'realise' the values traditionally proclaimed in philosophy, by producing a situation in which the 'tension between existence and essence' has disappeared.

It is hardly worth stressing that this aim is in fact utopian, which is precisely why Marx eventually stopped philosophising and turned to 'science.' The radical inconsequence and incoherence of Soviet Marxism lies in the fact that it maintains its 'philosophical' claims, while refusing to acknowledge that these pretensions make sense only if the philosopher adopts a critical attitude towards his environment. But this particular incoherence is due to political pressure upon the ideologists. *In principle* there is no reason why socialists should not treat Marxism as a philosophy—provided they are willing to concede that its ultimate aims have not been (and probably cannot be) realised.

Such an admission comes easiest to theologians, which is why Marxism (in its Hegelian form) is now becoming fashionable in those

(*Continued on page 81*)

[9] See Hommes, *Der Technische Eros* (Freiburg, 1955). Also the review by H. Dahm in the weekly *Ostprobleme*, No. 43, 26 October, 1956.

[10] See the latter's book, especially ch. V.—Sartre emerges from his frequent polemics as an increasingly isolated figure. If the Communists cannot utilise his philosophy, neither can the non-Communist Left, as long as he maintains the paradoxical position that the Communist Party, despite its defective ideology and its subservience to the USSR, is the only progressive force in France.

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GEORG LUKACS: AN INTELLECTUAL BIOGRAPHY

IV. Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein

Morris Watnick*

FOR all its seminal influence on the mind of the 'bourgeois' West, Lukacs' Marxism remained until recently a singularly homeless doctrine. *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* could pioneer new fields of research and fructify old ones, it could open fresh vistas of thought and insight, could even give currency to its own Marxist idiom—but seldom did it convert.

To its author, all this was not without a certain perversity of its own. Strictly speaking, Lukacs did not mean his book to be another inquiry into 'the meaning of Marx,' or a treatise on the sociology of knowledge, or any of the other things which academic circles in the West made of it. Nor, for all its Hegelianised existentialism—if one may risk such a *contradictio in adjecto*—did it share the preoccupation of latter-day existentialism with the pure subjectivity of human experience. First and foremost, it was the profession of faith of an æsthetic humanist turned Marxist, the commitment of one who had found in Marx a new analysis of the social dimension of man's self-estrangement in industrial society, in Hegel a vision of how it might be transcended in the dialectic of history, and in Lenin an élitist ethos that would work its will on men and societies to achieve that purpose. And yet, in keeping with all the other paradoxes of Lukacs' career, few in the West could take his Marxism *engagé* seriously, least of all those who valued his work for its critical and analytical Marxism! As Rosa Luxemburg once said with reference to her own work: *Habent sua fata libelli.*

But no matter. Small wonder, after all, that *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* became all things to all non-Marxists, most of them incidental to its main concern. It is only when one turns to a consideration of the book on its own Hegelian-Marxist terms and in their relation to Leninist doctrine and communist practice—to its native intellectual landscape, in other words—that it presents something of an elusive puzzle. A full generation after its publication, it still remains a work of disputed political identity, more so today perhaps than ever before. Repudiated by its own author to this very day, it is still taken by the orthodox as proof of his incorrigible 'deviationism'; the work of an avowed Leninist, it now has a compelling appeal for many casting about for an alternative to Leninism; long read by others as a learnedly argued case, if ever there was one, for the claims of an élitist party, its chief protagonists today are among communists who would divest their movement of those very claims—these are but some of the antinomies which make the status of the work itself as problematic as the career of its author.

To the guardians of Leninist orthodoxy, however, nothing could be less problematic than Lukacs' book, unless it be the new influence it has acquired in their ranks. Not since the early 20's, when they were first confronted by the challenge of a recrudescent Hegelianism in their central European 'sections,' have they had more reason to dread the spectre of a rival 'West European Communism' than is the case today. The philosophical 'revisionism' which has recently drawn so much of their spleen has already claimed a large number of communist intellectuals (among them, some of the best minds in the movement), who have had to live with reservations of one kind or another about many of the tenets of Leninist Marxism.[1] In fact,

* The earlier parts of Mr. Watnick's essay were published in *Soviet Survey*, Nos. 23, 24 and 25.

[1] The crisis which wracked the Communist parties everywhere following the 20th Congress of the CPSU went far to dispel the old illusion that communism necessarily means the same thing to all communists, at least in matters of policy. On questions of ultimate doctrine, however, it is still the fashion to deny that one can question any of the basic precepts of Leninism—say its metaphysic—and still qualify as a communist in any meaningful sense of the term. But this is no less fallacious than the notion that all communists favour the same policies, and can be shown to rest on the same confusion of logical with empirical categories. Cf. R. H. Hartman, 'Group Membership and Class Membership,' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, March 1953, pp. 353 ff.

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what makes the current 'revisionist' impulse all the more difficult for the orthodox to confront is that it speaks with far too many voices, each with a challenge of its own. Thus, if Henri Lefebvre, formerly one of the philosophical luminaries of the French party, had his way, much of the intellectual ballast of orthodox Leninism—its primitive subsumption of all philosophical problems under the rubrics of 'materialism' and 'idealism,' for instance—would presumably have to go by the board, along with the Stalinist encrustations against which he spoke out so vigorously of late.[2] At that, Lefebvre's 'revisionism' is a modest affair compared with its counterpart in Poland; there the Marxism emerging from the work of Kolakowski, Kott, and others is no longer a universal ontology of the Leninist type, but something drastically reduced to the status of a positivistic social science, coupled with a conception of values which is predominantly existential in approach.[3] More egregiously 'revisionist' still is the Marxism of Ernst Bloch, which has drawn a considerable following in East Germany by its avowedly prophetic-utopian outlook.[4] And there are others as well, different in origin and direction but all clearly wide of the Leninist mark.

WHETHER and to what extent Lukacs' early work may rightfully be regarded as a challenge to orthodox Leninism is a question for later consideration. Here it is enough to recall that it has always been anathematised as such by official communist spokesmen, long before the present babel of 'revisionist' tongues made itself heard.[5] And judging by all accounts, it is the vogue of a neo-Lukacsism of sorts today, however tentative and ill-defined, which haunts the minds of official ideologues most—so much so that it has almost become an obsession with them. At any rate, there is no better description for the concentrated fury of their attacks on the man and all his works, heard this last year without let-up from one end of eastern Europe to the other.[6] And unless they misjudge the temper of their own ranks, their invective may have good cause even if there is some doubt about its good sense. Silenced politically since his return to Hungary in 1957, Lukacs has seldom had a more explosive impact on the mood of communist intellectuals in eastern Europe than he has today, his name their reminder of a communism that might have been and his book, rightly or not, their promise of a Marxist humanism still to be fulfilled.[7]

Nor, for that matter, is the spell of Lukacs' Marxism confined any longer, as in the past, to the circle of his communist followers alone. Whatever the circumstances, his rôle in the Hungarian uprising was a gesture of intellectual integrity and outraged conscience so starkly in contrast to his past record of subservience to party authority as to have won him a new esteem in the eyes of many a non-communist. And as with the man, so apparently too with his book. For unless recent indications are decep-

[2] See his 'Le Marxisme et La Pensée Francaise,' *Les Temps Modernes*, July—August 1958, pp. 104 ff.

[3] For an abbreviated German translation of some representative Polish writings on the subject, see *Ost-Probleme* (Bonn), 15 March 1957, pp. 365 ff; 21 June 1957, pp. 614 ff; 16 August 1957, pp. 769 ff. CF. P. Mayewski (ed), *The Broken Mirror* (New York, 1958), *passim*.

[4] Since the Hungarian revolution, official attacks on Bloch, particularly for his latest work, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* 2 vols., (Berlin, 1954-1955), have assumed all-out proportions. What the orthodox attacks come to is contained in a collection of officially sponsored academic papers, *Ernst Blochs Revision des Marxismus* (Berlin, 1958). It might be well to note that despite the existential elements which they have in common and which official propaganda attacks emphasise so much, Bloch's Marxism parts company with Lukacs' in several important respects.

[5] For an account of the orthodox Leninist reaction to Lukacs' book, see the second article in this series in *Soviet Survey*, April-June 1958, pp. 51 ff.

[6] A tedious rehash of all the stock arguments deployed against Lukacs' book in 1923-24 and his literary views in 1949, the current attacks would hardly deserve mention but for the fact that their cumulative pressure may finally force another recantation from him. When he was permitted to return to Hungary in April 1957, there was reason to think that he might be spared this ordeal. But latest reports from Budapest indicate that this may not be the case. Cf. *N. Y. Times*, 26 October 1958.

[7] All this was apparent enough well before the Hungarian uprising, though pro-Lukacs sentiment was then confined to purely philosophical discussions. See, for example, the Hegel controversy which ran for two years (1954-56) in the pages of the *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* when it was still under Harich's editorship, particularly Harich's 'Uber des Verhältnis des Marxismus zur Philosophie Hegels,' Bd. IV, 1956, pp. 559 ff. Since then, the tenor of the official propaganda campaign against Lukacs which followed the suppression of the Harich group in East Germany has given the best indication that it is the humanistic element in Lukacs' Marxism which appeals most to disaffected communist intellectuals.

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tive, there is an incipient tendency in the West today to make out a new and more sympathetic case for the Marxism of *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*—meaning, this time, its integral and activist Marxism—by pitting it favourably against the politics and philosophy of Leninism. Lukacs' Marxism, argue those who take this view, had all the makings of a libertarian communism or, to put it more specifically, a communism which owes its impetus to the dynamic of self-initiated and self-directed working class activity. It was thus a Marxism in the Luxemburgian tradition of spontaneous mass action, fortified by a Hegelian faith in the dialectic of the class struggle as a process which transforms the mind of the worker until it finally achieves a genuine class consciousness. This, needless to say, could not go well with the orthodox Leninist disdain for the principle of 'spontaneity' or with its reliance on the party as the prime mover of the worker's thought and action, with the result that the joining of these two trends in the early days of the communist movement was a mésalliance bound to come to a quick end. Lukacs, in a word, was the last of the left Hegelians; when orthodox Leninists suppressed his Marxism, they silenced what was then the genuinely revolutionary alter ego of their own movement and thus helped to prepare the intellectual ground for the triumph under Stalin of the right Hegelian ideal—a totalitarian Soviet state, professing to incorporate the 'will' not only of its own population, but of the entire 'world' proletariat as well.[8]

WHAT makes this reading of Lukacs' Marxism seem all the more plausible, both to his partisans in eastern Europe and, of late, to well-disposed commentators in the West, is the disposition to give an orthodoxy its due. Presumably, or at least by inference, the spokesmen of a movement which stakes so much on the indoctrination of its followers, down to the last detail of metaphysical thinking, should know what they are about when they brand a doctrine as apocryphal. To parody Alice's Mad Hatter, they alone can say what they mean in matters of doctrine, even if they do not always mean what they say in other respects. All this granted, what could be taken as more conclusive than the fact that the *Odium theologicum*, pronounced on Lukacs' book more than a generation ago, still remains in full force today? Indeed, the more insistently orthodox communists continue to pillory its arguments for being what they regard as nothing more than the 'deviationist' blunders of a would-be Leninist, the better it may commend itself for that very reason to dissidents in their own ranks, not to mention sympathetically-minded outsiders for whom Leninism never had any enchantment.

All of which is reason enough to suspect that something has gone distinctly amiss in this rendering of the man and his work, that a Lukacs myth may be in the making, with his protagonists and his orthodox critics alike having a hand in its propagation. The book which is being refurbished today by the former and still being anathemetised by the latter, each for reasons of their own, is a work after their own hearts or hates as the case may be, not what it was originally meant to be by its author. Well might Lukacs recall the words of the actor in *Hamlet:* 'Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own.' What, then, was the *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* which he could rightfully claim as his own, were he not under a compulsion to disavow it entirely?

Before going on to consider the question, it might be well first to disengage the book from the grip of current preconceptions, most notably the two already mentioned. To begin with the one of more recent origin, there is an undercurrent of opinion which regards Lukacs' repudiation of Stalinism and his participation in the Hungarian uprising as the logical expression and long overdue psychological return to the libertarian and humanistic strain of Marxism expounded in his *Geschichte und Klassen-*

[8] The most recent instance in this vein to have come to the writer's attention is I. Fetscher's 'Das Verhältnis des Marxismus zu Hegel,' *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*; *Beilage zur Wochenzeitung, Das Parlament* (Bonn), 21 and 28 May 1958. Fetscher's discussion scores to good effect on a number of issues having to do with the general character of Soviet Marxism, but his analysis of the relation of Lukacs' book to the Leninist tradition is one to which this writer takes strong exception. In its concern to show that Lukacs' revolutionary humanism was more authentically Marxist than the ultra-scientism of Lenin, it slights to the point of omission those elements of Lukacs' thought—particularly his doctrine of class consciousness—which make it every degree as elitist as orthodox Leninism, and more systematically so at that.

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bewusstsein.[9] It was this strain, one gathers, which gave his Marxism its distinctly non-Leninist orientation, his own professed Leninism notwithstanding—so much so as to sanction defiance of the party whenever it becomes clearly destructive of its own revolutionary purpose. In turning against the power of a communist régime, then, it was as if Lukacs were once again acting on something akin to the logic of the Rubashov principle, deducing his own conduct in a revolutionary situation from a pre-established doctrine and making his choice accordingly—except that the doctrines in this case supposedly called not for an act of submission, but for a revolutionary break with the party.

TO anyone familiar with Lukacs' career as a communist and with the argument of his book, any such account of the rationale of his part in the events of 1956 is little more than a fanciful embellishment on both counts. It over-simplifies the complexity of Lukacs' motives and, in so doing, it also misconstrues their relation to the doctrine of his book. This is not to suggest that he lacked any clear-cut principle of action in turning against the communist régime in Hungary, much less that he acted as a rebel from reasons of self-interest; no opportunist with an eye to the uncertainties of the critical months preceding the fighting would have risked going to Lukacs' lengths as a critic of the régime. Indeed, his entire political career is as good a case as any—or better still, perhaps, one of the few credible cases—of the close link between theory and action on which communist literature dilates so persistently. But make what one will of this, the fact remains that the Hungarian uprising had a unique meaning in his long career as a communist, so unique as to cast immediate doubt on the particular inspirational rôle now being credited to his book. If anything, it was the only instance of his ever having acted in total disregard of the hierarchy of political values prescribed by his early work.

For Lukacs personally, the Hungarian uprising entailed the first violent rupture with his own political past, the only one of his many crises of conscience which released him from decades of subservience to the party and gave him the voice to denounce the very policies he had previously made a pretence of supporting.[10] And these, as he explicitly identified them, made up the entire fabric of the post-war Stalinist programme, from all that went with the doctrine of 'two camps' in international affairs and the attempt to sovietise the communist states of eastern Europe, to the indiscriminate attacks on all schools of non-communist thought and the stultifying *Zhdanovshchina* enforced in cultural life.[11] But if these were indeed the words of the authentic Lukacs of *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*, as many would now have it, what is one to make of the Lukacs of the decade before, whose name had been a by-word for Stalinist apologetics, the Lukacs who was so quick to recant his one 'deviation' when called to account by the leadership of his party?[12] Must we conclude that this, somehow, was a Stalinised Lukacs for whom the Marxist humanism of his book had lost all meaning? Or was it rather a case of giving public support to Stalinist policies not from any agreement with them, but because the principle of submission had acquired an overriding priority in Lukacs' thought?[13]

[9] See, for example, T. Munzer, 'A Propos de Lukacs,' *Arguments* (Paris), April-May, 1957, pp. 17 ff. For a slightly abbreviated English translation, see *Dissent*, Spring, 1958, pp. 162 ff.

[10] Whether this mood will last and for how long are matters of sheer conjecture. For whatever it was worth, the symbolic triumph registered by the régime when he returned to Hungary has been annulled since then by his refusal to be stampeded into a recantation. The more puzzling, then, that he fell sufficiently into line to denounce 'revisionism' as the principal threat to Marxism today (sic!) in the one personal statement he has issued since his return. See note (14).

[11] The main outlines of his indictment of Stalinist policies may be read in his 'Der Kampf des Fortschritts und der Reaktion in der heutigen Kultur,' *Aufbau* (Berlin), September 1956, pp. 761 ff. For an abbreviated English version, see W. Z. Laqueur and G. Lichtheim, *The Soviet Cultural Scene*, 1956-1957 (London and New York, 1958), pp. 95 ff. Cf. his remarks to the Petofi Circle as reported in *Magyar Nemzet*, 17 June 1956.

[12] The reference here is to Lukacs' recantation of his literary views in 1949-50.

[13] What makes this more than a supposition and gives added point to the problem of Lukacs' behaviour is, of course, the knowledge that, for all his many Stalinist chores during the post-war decade, he was nevertheless opposed from the very first to the main lines of Stalinist policy. It did not take any special aptitude for Aesopean language to discover this in 1946, for example, when he argued for a Marxism that would maintain the continuity of European culture, serving as the heir to the rationalism and the humanism of the bourgeois Enlightenment and transmitting their values without drastic breaks or arbitrarily forced transitions to the socialist future. See the text of his speech, Rencontres Internationales de Geneve, *L'Esprit Européen* (Neuchatel, 1946), pp. 165 ff.

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Or, to go back still further, what of the twelve years (1933-1945) when he lived in the Soviet Union, wrestling with his principles when not fearing for his own safety as he saw the terror of the thirties claiming its victims, among them most of his fellow exiles from Hungary? It is true, of course, that protest would have been vain in the circumstances, and fatal as well. Nevertheless, we have his own word for it today, in a recently published document which still reflects the perplexity of a divided conscience, that quite apart from considerations of expediency, he had accepted the purge trials as a 'historical necessity,' that all scruples and sympathies had to be sacrificed for the sake of the struggle with Nazi Germany 'no matter what the party under Stalin's leadership did'—in short, that a communist had no choice but to take the position that it was simply a case of 'my side, right or wrong.'[14] Should these too be taken as betrayals of his Marxist humanism, or did they— even as rationalisations— indicate the same over-riding sense of commitment to the party? And finally, if that Marxist humanism was Lukacs' main concern in *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*, how account for his latest repudiation of the book, after having all but read himself out of the movement by actions supposedly inspired by its message?[15]

NOT, of course, that such questions can be answered, one way or the other, merely by a correct reading of his work. The predicament of political choice is seldom, if ever, resolved by direct recourse to first principles alone, not even by one so sensitively attuned to them as Lukacs. In 1956, for example, it made for a vast difference in his political behaviour that his own anti-Stalinism could converge with the momentum of a nationwide uprising, and could also take its cue from the proceedings of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, rather than spend itself in frustrated silence, as it had in the years before. To anyone who scans all the four decades of his career as a communist, its long silences of submission no less than its brief eruptions of defiance, the record is enough to indicate a pattern of motivation far more tangled and tragic than that suggested by the heroic presentment of recent Lukacs enthusiasts. Their impression to the contrary notwithstanding, Lukacs *qua* communist is not a personification of his book; the sources of his political conduct are his own, embedded in the deepest recesses of his personality, and thus, in the nature of the case, something which cannot be reduced to the intellectual dimensions of a doctrine.

This is not to deny that Lukacs' book had a bearing on his political behaviour. Quite the contrary; there is an unmistakable relationship between them, and an important one at that, but it is not the relationship discerned by his new devotees. If the Marxist humanism of his book were of itself the regulative principle of his activities as a communist, there is good reason to believe that he would have broken with the movement long before 1956, a far more disillusioned man than countless others who defected without having anything like his highly articulated sense of doctrine. May it not be then, as the foregoing excursion into his past suggests, that he has persevered in the movement for so long, 'deviations' and all, not from any disregard for the principles of Marxist humanism, but becasue—among other things—his is a Marxist humanism which carries its own mandate for such a course of conduct? If so, the Lukacs who could bring himself to say, 'my side, right or wrong,' is indeed the Lukacs of *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein;* what his devotees value as his Marxist humanism is there, to be sure, but only to be transmuted into and superseded by a mystique of total commitment to the 'will' of the party and thus paralysed at its very source—a humanism *manqué*, in short, incapable of making its values prevail over the imperatives of the party hierarchy.

The second major source of confusion about *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* can be traced to the fate of the book itself. Anathema to orthodox party communists ever since it was condemned for its 'deviations' in 1924, it has had to live an extramural existence among two different groups, each with its own standard of

[14] The document in question is a postscript which Lukacs wrote, apparently after his return to Hungary in 1957, to a Japanese reprint of his autobiographic memoir of 1933, 'Mein Weg zu Marx.' A French translation appeared in *France-Observateur*, 25 September 1958.

[15] Published in *Arguments* (Paris), December 1957, pp. 30-31.

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appraisal. One of them, as already mentioned, has been made up largely of philosophers and sociologists who found it richly suggestive for their own purposes, quite apart from its political Marxism, and who could therefore read it as neutrals. The other, with a more direct focus of political interest, recalled it mainly for the very 'deviations' which put it in bad odour with orthodox communists and thus, by an easy transition, came to think of it as the classic argument for a communism of the non-Leninist type. It is clearly this latter inference which sustains much of the renewed interest in the book today.

ANY such interest is certain to go unrewarded. *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* is a work of many moods and dimensions but, for all that, the underlying structure of its argument is unmistakably Leninist to the core, if by Leninism we mean an attempt to force the pace of the dialectic of history as Marx had foreseen it, and a doctrine which entrusts this act of premeditated history to the consciousness of a party élite. These are the specifically Leninist elements in Leninism, the ultimate source of its appeal to groups in the underdeveloped countries of the world animated by a desire 'to overtake and surpass' the West, and the sustaining drive of communist régimes where they already exist. And they are also the very elements of the Leninist creed which Lukacs' book blended into a new synthesis of learning and subtle argument never matched in Lenin's own writings, let alone in those of his orthodox exegetes. Had it not been all but suppressed in the communist movement, it might well have become one of the most widely read of communist texts today.

All this, it would seem, makes the case-history of the book more puzzling than ever. Why, in view of its character, did it come in for so much official vituperation when it was published? Why was it under a ban of silence for more than a generation, followed by renewed attacks recently? May there not be some justification, after all, for suspecting that more was at stake than the organisational interests of the Comintern and its Russian leaders in the virtual suppression of Lukacs' book in 1924?

Actually, of course, there was. What Lukacs' book challenged was not the essential core of Leninist doctrine—quite the contrary!—but the codified Marxism-Leninism which orthodox scholiasts had proceeded to canonise as the state dogma of the Soviet Union and as the creed prescribed to communists everywhere. The difference between the two was quite considerable, as any study of Lenin's intellectual development makes apparent. The vision of an anticipatory revolution as the distinctive function of a Marxist élite was Lenin's own and the dominating principle of his entire political life. But with it went a larger miscellany of Marxist theories which now pass under the name of Marxism-Leninism, some formulated by himself, others gleaned from the writings of Kautsky, Plekhanov, Hilferding, or any other source that might best have served the political needs of the moment. The point to be borne in mind is that, more often than not, he would borrow his *ad hoc* Marxism without being too concerned about its relation to his own central commitment, with the result that his writings constitute less a systematic body of thought than a succession of views, once held and then discarded, without regard for their logical consistency.

Of nothing was this more true than Lenin's philosophical ideas. But for an accident of circumstance, he might have learned his philosophy from the neo-Kantian Marxists in central Europe, or even from Bogdanov, whom he was to pillory so mercilessly in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* without any real understanding of the problems at issue. Or, to take another possibility, what if he had turned to a study of Hegel, as indeed he did after 1914 and thus too late, as it turned out, to make any difference with his orthodox disciples after the revolution?[16] At the very least, any of these possibilities offered an epistemology far more in keeping with Lenin's activist political philosophy than the transcript theory of consciousness to which he subscribed. As it happened, however, he owed his entire philosophical training, such as it was, to Plekhanov who,

[16] Lenin's glosses on Hegel's writings were first published in 1929, long after his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* had become standard dogma. Though mere fragments, they were enough to indicate that Lenin had moved a considerable distance from his earlier views. Needless to say, Soviet exegetes have devoted considerable casuistry to the task of reconciling them with their own orthodoxy.

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significantly enough, was among the first to see the discrepancy between the positivistic Marxism which he had transmitted to his disciple and the general drift of Lenin's political philosophy.

Again, not that this mattered to Lenin himself, if he ever gave it any thought at all. Philosophy was not his *forte*, as anyone reading his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* soon comes to realise; in any case it was a secondary concern which he did not hesitate to forget for the sake of political advantage. One might even go so far as to argue that, for all the evidence of his writings to the contrary, Lenin would have indulged any communist who insisted on being his own Marxist in philosophical matters. Be that as it may, it was his public writings which became the model for his orthodox disciples, and Lukacs' book was among the first to take the full brunt of their fanaticism. What made it so vulnerable to orthodox attack was that it substituted for Lenin's inadequate and inappropriate metaphysic a dialectic of consciousness which, waiving its merits in other respects, was obviously closer to the meaning and purpose of Leninism. Or, to sum it up in personal terms, Lukacs acquired his first fame as a 'deviationist' because he was a more thorough-going and more sophisticated Leninist then Lenin himself.

(*Continued from page 74*)

quarters, at any rate in Europe. The counterpart of this tolerance is a growing conviction that the Communist movement in the West is moribund, while in the USSR its meta-political aims have *not* been achieved—and therefore continue to lead a blameless existence in the realm of the spirit, like other metaphysical values before them. This is precisely the kind of relationship that Marx never tired of satirising in the case of theology and traditional philosophy. If the current controversy in France and Germany is any guide, a similar dichotomy is now about to overtake his own system. From this point of view it makes little difference whether the accent is placed on the Hegelian *Logos* or—with Wetter and his opposite numbers among the French Jesuits—on Being. An ontology—whether conceived on Hegelian or Aristotelian lines—can never be anything but a transcendental resting place for ideals that have not been realised in actuality. If this is the secret of idealism, as Marx believed it to be, then the current talk about Marxism as a philosophy suggests that we are nearing the end of an important chapter in modern history. It only remains then for a tacit acknowledgment of this situation to spread to the Soviet Union—but here scepticism is in order. The Kremlin, like the Vatican, guards its secrets, of which the chief is an implicit awareness of failure.

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DOCUMENT

Freudism in the light of contemporary scientific discussion

S. V. Bassin

(*S. V. Bassin's article, 'Freudism in the light of contemporary scientific discussion,' published in* Voprosy Psikhologii, 1958, 5 (*appearing in November* 1958), *is perhaps the most interesting document in this particular field to come out of the Soviet Union for many a year. Coupled with the customary denunciation of psychoanalysis as one of the most reactionary schools of thinking in the West, it represents a partial retreat from the traditional Pavlovian concepts and the acceptance of some of the basic ideas of 'Freudism.' Such a development, however fragmentary and tentative, was forecast in a previous number of* Survey *more than two years ago* (*August* 1956). *Though qualified by many reservations and by a general attempt to accommodate these revisions within the wider framework of Pavlovian psychology, it is nevertheless an indication of some fresh thinking among Soviet psychologists and psychiatrists. Whether and to what limits a re-examination will be permitted to proceed is uncertain. But those familiar with the general approach and tenor of Soviet psychological publications during the last twenty years will undoubtedly detect important divergences from yesterday's orthodox pronouncements. At the very same time as the young Marx, or to be precise the re-discovery of the Socialist Humanism of the young Marx by Western Marxists encounters disapproval in Moscow, the young 'materialistic' Freud has been re-discovered in the Soviet Union and has been paid tribute, implicit and half-hearted though it may be. The present essay, and other recent documents indicating new trends in Soviet psychological thinking, will be subjected to specialised analysis and comment in future issues of* Soviet Survey.)

IN recent years the body of doctrine elaborated by Freud has repeatedly been the subject of discussion, in Soviet as well as in foreign literature. There can nowadays be no doubt that modern Freudism, which in other countries has extended its influence to the most various fields of intellectual life, and in effect claims the status of a philosophical system *sui generis*, and the rôle an of integral and complete world-view, is in fact a profoundly reactionary conception, utterly hostile to the dialectical-materialist trend in neurological and humane studies.

What has induced us to return to the examination of this theory?

The first reason is as follows. The development of the theory of the localisation of cerebral functions has thrown new light on the significance of sub-cortical formations for the performance of the most complicated forms of cerebral activity. This circumstance, reflecting as it does an indisputable advance in understanding of first-rate importance to the whole future development of neuro-physiology, has at the same time had some negative results. In psychology and psychiatry abroad it has caused a sharp revival of Freudian interpretations, which try to utilise the new data supplied by the theory of localisation to give depth to the psychoanalytical conception. In neurology it has stimulated a revival of the line already discernible at the beginning of the century in the work of Reichardt, Haskowitz, Kuypers, Camus, and others, which consistently strives to connect the discharge of the highest forms of cerebral activity with the functions of formations of the sub-cortical level.

In these circumstances the need arises to subject the new data of the theory of localisation to a careful examination and to show that there is absolutely no basis for attempts to utilise them for the defence of the basic thesis of Freudism about the leading part allegedly played by affective and vital factors of sub-cortical origin in the determination of behaviour. We shall, however, be able to carry out this task fully only if we show at the same time just how these new data can be explained from the standpoint of our own basic Pavlovian conception of the tonigenic function of sub-cortical formations.

There is also a second reason which induces us to return to the criticism of the psycho-analytical conception. In 1954 a previously unknown work by Freud (the so-called *Project*, written as early as 1895), was discovered and published for the first time. In the light of this work the whole long history of Freudism is revealed as a process of deeper and deeper scientific degradation of psychoanalytical concepts, closely connected with the rejection of mechanistic interpretations, which, it turns out, Freud subscribed to in the first phase of the working-out of his conception. On this interpretation,

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we are obviously faced with the need to draw some line of demarcation between (on the one hand) the clinical psychological ideas which Freud put forward in the last century, which fit into the framework of the mechanistic world-view and, as we shall see later, contain certain potentialities for further productive development, and (on the other hand) all the subsequent speculative interpretation of these ideas, scientifically and philosophically profoundly inadequate, which in the end turned Freudism into one of the most reactionary manifestations of contemporary bourgeois ideology, deeply hostile to any genuine scientific progress . . . .

A STUDY of the evolution of Freudism over more than half a century permits us to distinguish four successive stages.

The first belongs to the last fifteen years of the nineteenth century. During this period Freud, jointly with Breuer, published two monographs formulating for the first time the basic propositions of the Freudian theory of 'displacement,' as it is called, which afterwards formed the basis for the psychoanalytical theory of functional disorders. The gist of these propositions can be summed up as follows: every experience which has the character of an impulse to a particular action possesses as it were a reserve of energy, as a result of which it strives for realisation in behaviour. But if realisation is for some reason unattainable then the suppressed energy of the impulse to action may find an indirect outlet, producing a symptom of hysteria.

After the publication of Freud's *Project*—a work which belongs to this first period, and constitutes an attempt to deduce basic psychological regularities from special features of the excitation and inhibition of cortical neurons—no doubt can remain that at this early stage Freud was certainly not as yet an adherent of anti-physiological idealism. On the contrary, his research work during these years shows him to have been a neuropathologist with a positivistic outlook, a disciple of the generally recognised scholars Brucke, Meinert, and, in particular, Charcot, a neuropathologist concentrating on the study of aphasias and children's paralyses to begin with, and later on problems of the therapy of functional disorders, trying to base himself in his work on the totality of positive knowledge which had accumulated by the end of the 19th century. In his research into aphasias Freud criticised the narrowly localising theories of Brock and Wernicke from the standpoint of wider conceptions close in spirit to the ideas of Jackson: and his work on the problem of infantile cerebral paralysis was in Pierre Marie's opinion (as Benassy points out) the fullest, most precise, and most carefully thought out monograph written on the theme up to that time. The works of this period indicate no inclination on the part of Freud to speculative psychological theorising.

The second stage in the development of Freudism, which has frequently come under the light of criticism in our literature, is characterised by Freud's gradual change of course to a highly peculiar form of psychopathological analysis. At this period Freud put forward his theory of psychological factors which repress impulses striving for realisation—a theory which manipulates the far-fetched symbolism of the 'ego' the 'super-ego' and the 'censorship'; he carried out an analysis of conditions under which neutralisation of the pathogenic energy of repressed impulse to action takes place (the chief condition according to Freud is that the repressed impulse should be brought into consciousness); he worked out methods for the psychoanalytical revelation of displaced emotions; and, finally, he created a complex system of ideas on the nature of the urges especially subject to repression. As is well known, these repressed urges, from the view-point of orthodox Freudism, are of an almost exclusively sexual character, and the infinite variety of other inhibiting impulses is not taken into account.

As for Freud's methodological principles at this period, they were clearly expressed in his characteristic conviction that, inasmuch as we know little about the physiological mechanism of the working of the brain, psychological theory must be developed quite independently of physiology and without relying on it.

The prohibition against the inclusion of physiological concepts in the system of psychological analysis tells us a great deal about the Freudism of this period. It forms a peculiar antithesis to the famous Pavlovian prohibition at the beginning of the twentieth century against the inclusion of psychological concepts in a system of physiological analysis, and underlines the diametrical opposition between the spirit of Pavlov's teaching and the style of Freud's researches. History showed later on what a high price Freud had to pay for trying to construct a theory of cerebral activity while ignoring the physiological theory of cerebral mechanisms. In practice, inasmuch as Freud

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refused any rapprochement with physiology, he naturally found himself compelled to link his concepts with the field of generalisations of a social-historical character. And since Marxist ideology remained profoundly alien to Freud throughout his life, his excursions into the sphere of the social sciences could be nothing but a deviation in the direction of historical idealism, obscurantism, and the most vulgar pseudo-scientific lucubrations. The best proof of this is an acquaintance with such later works of Freud as his theory of the origin of human society in the sexual Oedipus complex; his idea that war has a biological cause in an innate instinct of aggression, expounded in his open letter to Einstein; his denial of the value of cultural progress; his theory of the existence of a special death instinct, which met the sharpest criticism at a symposium on the problem of instinct which took place recently in France; and several other works concerned with 'meta-psychology' or the psychoanalytical sociology of Freudism.

The period during which he created these works, with their attempt to analyse problems of a sociological order, embraces the last two decades of Freud's life and is the third major stage in the development of the Freudian conception, while the fourth and last stage belongs to the post-war period and the present day.

The most characteristic feature of the fourth stage is an unexpected change in the attitude of the psychoanalysts to problems of physiology. The insoluble difficulties which psychoanalytical theory came up against because of its traditional antiphysiological approach, the intellectual cul-de-sac in which Freudism finally found itself, caused in recent years deep dissensions in the Freudian camp itself, and led to a re-examination of their attitude to the concepts and methods of neuro- and electro-physiology. This change of direction finds vivid expression in the report of Kubie, one of the most prominent Freudians in the United States, at the last but one international psychological congress at Montreal, and in a number of other works published by Freudians in recent years. The new and obviously forced re-orientation of Freudism expressively underlined the utter sterility of the fundamental approach to which psychoanalysis has adhered for half a century. At the same time, it has confronted critics of Freudism with the task of refuting the false arguments from physiology which contemporary psychoanalysts are trying to put forward ....

WE have already mentioned that Freud and Breuer started from the idea that a suppressed impulse to action, an urge which does not find realisation in behaviour, becomes pathogenic. Obviously, we are confronted here with the idea of the pathogenic character of a conflict of desires, curiously expressed.

How did Freud develop this idea later on?

It is hardly necessary to emphasise that the idea of the pathogenic properties of a conflict of ideas is in itself an important general proposition, which was put forward by clinical practice and Pavlovian physiology quite independently of Freud's theory. We have in mind the investigations of M. K. Petrova and many other widely known works by physiologists of the Pavlovian school, the researches of the 19th century scientists Zakharin and Botkin, and clinical work carried out at a later period by G. F. Lange, A. A. Bogomolets, R. A. Luria, M. L. Myasnikov, Bergman, and many other authors, work which has shown conclusively how wide are the possibilities of the development of the gravest functional and organic disorders as a result of so-called 'shocks' and the emotional contradictions of every-day life.

It follows from the research mentioned above that the idea of the pathogenic character of a conflict of desires, and the Freudian account of the psychological mechanisms of this pathogenesis, must never in any circumstances be taken as identical. Critics of Freudism must emphasise this fact, since the erroneous idea that conflicts of desire are studied only by Freudism is still unfortunately pretty widespread.

To understand in what the error of Freud's formulation of the concept of affective conflict consists, we must remember the quite peculiar explanation of the mechanisms of the action of this conflict which Freud, obviously under the influence of Charcot's ideas, put forward right at the beginning. It was based on the assumption that there exists a relationship of a quite special type between the suppressed impulse and the clinical syndrome which it causes—a relationship thanks to which the clinical syndrome is not only conditioned by the suppressed impulse but symbolically expresses this urge in behaviour. If the suppressed impulse is, for instance, to approach a certain person or dance with him, such a conflict must, according to Freud, evoke in the neurotic not merely a deterioration in his condition, unconnected in character with the psychological content of the impulse, but a functional disorder in the form, say, of a disturbance of his normal gait, in which the in-

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hibited impulse finds its symbolic expression and substitute. Obviously, in committing himself to such an idiosyncratic interpretation, Freud completely cut himself off from the possibility of utilising the broader conception, the reality of which was subsequently proved by innumerable experiments and clinical observations, and according to which functional and organic disorders caused by conflict reflect in the overwhelming majority of cases only non-specific disturbances in the dynamics of nervous processes, and have no relation at all to the psychological content of the conflict.

The experience gained from a very great deal of work on the treatment of the most various disorders shows that it is with such non-specific changes, unconnected in any form whatsoever with the psychological content of the conflict, that we most frequently have to deal. As regards those peculiar episodes, which are considerably rarer but none the less observed on occasions, especially in the treatment of hysteria, when there can be detected a definite sense connection between the functional disturbance caused by a conflict and the psychological content of the conflict, here it is really possible to speak of a sort of manifestation of the suppressed impulse in a pathological syndrome, a sort of round-about outlet for the inhibited impulses to action, but certainly not of a manifestation of these inhibited impulses on the basis of a sort of preliminary symbolical processing. A hysterical disorder can certainly have an adaptational character, *i.e.*, the character of a reaction which facilitates the attainment of a particular aim by the patient. (As an example we may take the development of a hysterical motor paralysis in a situation when this complaint saves the patient from the need to pursue some repugnant course of action.) But to regard such a disorder as a 'symbolic expression' of the suppressed impulse is permissible to no greater extent than, say, treating ordinary behaviour as a symbolic expression of the normal motives for action. The very psychological adequacy and logicality of the relation in such cases between the clinical syndrome and the suppressed impulse is incompatible with any evaluation of this relation connecting it with the symbolic transformation of the impulse, since if there really were any such transformation then the logicality of the connections between syndrome and situation would inevitably be camouflaged.

It is, then, possible to admit (and, as we shall see later, there are sufficiently weighty clinical and experimental reasons for doing so) that a pathological syndrome evoked by a conflict sometimes really does reflect the psychological content of the suppressed impulse. But we have no grounds for assuming that such a manifestation of suppressed impulses necessarily involves their symbolic transformation.

We have dwelt on the peculiarity of the Freudian approach to the problem of conflict because the psychoanalytical method of bringing to light inhibited urges is in effect completely based on the idea that there exists a process by which impulses necessarily undergo symbolic transformation. It might be thought that Freud, having adopted this view, should have given the most serious attention to the analysis of the regularities of this symbolic transformation. In fact he followed a totally different path. Regarding the interpretation of the symbolic experiences which are said to occur in the sleeping or the wakeful state as a kind of art which can be acquired intuitively, Freud from the very beginning introduced into psychoanalytical technique the greatest arbitrariness in interpretation, which robbed his method of all conviction and objectivity. In the works of Freud we come across copious lists of various images with an elucidation of their symbolic meaning, but it is utterly impossible to find out either from the works of Freud or from the researches of his numerous pupils, on what basis exactly the psychoanalyst concludes that a particular image symbolises a particular content and no other. Freudism offers no experimental verification of the hypothesis of symbolic transformation, no theoretical foundation for the suggested connections between experience and its symbolic expression.

All this taken together shows how dearly Freud paid for his anti-physiological principles: although he realised more than half a century ago the pathogenetic significance of affective conflicts, in his analysis of such processes Freud followed a methodologically incorrect path, and as a result could not in the slightest degree make use of the indisputable advantages which the idea of conflict potentially contains....

TO complete the characterisation of the theses which were the point of departure for early Freudism, it remains only to touch on another question of great importance to their evaluation. What is the real significance of Freud's concept of mental experience as a functionally charged impulse to action, a sort of vector with a charge of energy? Are we dealing with a figure of speech, a literary metaphor, or

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does Freudism attach some concrete and specific meaning to this concept?

First of all we must state that Freud never even tried to make more precise the meaning of this particular basic concept of his. We call attention to this fact because many critics of Freudism base their whole evaluation of the psychoanalytical conception on the undeniable obscurity of the central Freudian concept. This, in particular, is the procedure of Harry Wells, one of the most original and interesting contemporary critics of Freudism, and well-known to Soviet readers.

'Freud does not explore physiologically the concept of the functional charge of the impulse to action,' says Wells. 'We are therefore bound to think that the concept was introduced under the influence of vitalist ideas of entelechy, Schopenhauer's voluntarism, and the idealistic conceptions of Fechner.' 'Freud,' Wells goes on, 'gave no experimental evidence for his idea of the functional charge of impulses. This idea must therefore be regarded as purely speculative, and since the system of psychoanalysis ultimately rests on this idea, Freud's whole structure really represents nothing but speculation.'

Such is Well's sceptical general conclusion. A more rigorous analysis, however, shows that in arguing thus Wells is guilty of certain inexactitudes, with the result that he gives insufficient emphasis to the most radical deficiency of Freudism, while his critical arguments are only partly correct.

It is true that Freud did not explore physiologically the concept of functional charge of impulses. At a later period the reason for his failure to do so was obviously his anti-physiological principle. But Freud can hardly be blamed for the absence of an attempted solution along these lines at the time when the concept was first developed. Such a solution was completely beyond the powers of physiology at the end of the 19th century. Even in our day, after the discovery of the so-called non-specific cortical-subcortical projections, and the tonic influences of the reticular formation of the brain stem on various forms of higher cerebral activity, the question of the physiological basis of the affective charge of an experience connected with a concrete psychological content remains quite obscure. But there can be no doubt at all, now that we are familiar with his *Project*, that when he was working out the concept of the functional charge of impulses Freud drew his intellectual inspiration not from the idealistic but from the materialistic trend in neurology.

Well's second observation—that Freud did not work out experimentally the idea of the functional charge of impulse—is correct in itself. But for us the most important thing is not Freud's personal participation or non-participation in such experimental explorations so much as the possibility of such explorations, how to carry them out in practice and their concrete results. To get an answer to these more general questions we must turn to the broad sphere of research work carried out decades after Freud's first publications by authors who never had close ideological ties with Freud but whose subject of study was this same problem of the inhibited impulse to action and the changes in the dynamics of elementary and complex reactions caused by such inhibited impulses . . . .

OF course, in making use of the concept of functional charge of impulses to action we are applying a category which in no circumstances goes beyond the framework of concepts of purely functional psychology, and we certainly do not reveal the physiological basis of affective charge, but merely conclude that such a charge exists from the changes in elementary reactions and behaviour which it causes and which are removed if the impulse to action is realised. This very fact confirms the reality of such a charge and establishes the active character of its influences and the possibility of studying them objectively.

Clearly, to accuse Freud of basing his conception on an invented idea, a sort of psychological function, as Wells does, is to develop an insufficiently strict line of criticism. Freud's basic error is much more subtle, complex, and better disguised. It lies in the rôle which he assigned to the concept in his system. What I have in mind is the following.

For Freud the functionally charged impulse to action is a peculiar kind of atom in the system of human behaviour. The whole mental life of man, and all his activity, are explained according to Freud by the struggle between such impulses and psychological factors created by the social character of human consciousness, which resist them. Freudism in effect applies no other psychological categories in the analysis of behaviour, and so the real and immeasurably more complex structure of human activity, connected with definite relationships between the motives of action-need, purposive mechanism, initial stimulus, on the one hand, and the completed action on the other, escaped Freud once and for all. Because of the absence of

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similar, more profound concepts of the psychological organisation of behaviour and the structure of activity, functionally charged impulses in Freud's view play the part of abstract psychological vectors, moving allegedly in a peculiar vacuum of consciousness (or the 'sub-conscious'), in which apart from them there is room for nothing else except forces antagonistic to them, such as the 'censor,' the 'super-ego,' etc.

Given its over-simplified, not to say vulgarised, approach to the problem of the structure of human activity, psychoanalytical theory could not and in fact did not raise the question of the dependence of the fate of impulses on their inclusion in more general psychological structures such as purposive mechanisms (in the sense which D. N. Uznadze gives to this concept). And as a result of this Freud's range did not extend to the most important question of the dependence of impulse on that general system of attitude to reality within the framework of which the impulse makes its appearance, nor yet to the whole body of problems concerning the infinite possibilities for the transformation of impulses consciously connecting them with a new psychological content and, consequently, without any need for the mechanism of the notorious 'displacements.'

Fairness demands, however, that we should note that Freud on two occasions came very close to the problem (which is very important for the whole theory of the structure of activity) of the dependence of an impulse's fate on that more general psychological structure in which the impulse was included. These occasions were when he was working on the problem of so-called sublimation and, particularly, in his analysis of the concept according to which recovery depends on bringing the suppressed impulse to consciousness. But it is very characteristic of Freud's style of thought that he never once tried to explore more deeply his basic therapeutic thesis by explaining why exactly the restoration of a suppressed impulse to consciousness should have a healing effect. There are many grounds for thinking that the clinical modifications caused by a suppressed impulse are in fact profoundly changed after the impulse is brought into consciousness, but this fact can hardly be explained except on the supposition that becoming conscious of the suppressed impulse means inevitably including it in a definite system of attitude to reality, a definite psychological mechanism which facilitates the emergence of a critical attitude to the impulse and so profoundly changes the whole range of psychological and physiological influences which the impulse is capable of exercising. Explanations on these lines were, however, always utterly alien to Freud, and it is therefore natural that he never tried to develop them.

As for the psychoanalytical explanation of the so-called sublimation of impulses, here we can see especially clearly how much Freud was attracted by pseudo-psychological systems, close in spirit to the concepts of physics and Ostwaldian energetics. The sublimation of an impulse, *i.e.* its transference to a new psychological content, is explained, according to Freud, simply by the transference of a charge of 'psychic energy' from one impulse to another. It would probably be difficult to find a franker and more primitive physicalism, a more mechanistic approach in psychology.

We cannot here spend further time in criticising the way of interpreting the concept of functional charge of impulses to action which is characteristic of psychoanalytical theory. To carry the criticism further would necessitate an analysis of the relations between affective impulses, behaviour, and mechanisms, in Uznadze's sense, an analysis of the whole problem of the psychological organisation of action, and would take us away from the basic questions which concern us. What has been said gives sufficient grounds for the conclusion of greatest importance to us. Psychologically understood, the concept of the charge of an impulse to action is just as acceptable scientifically and just as susceptible of precise study as the idea of the pathogenic character of a conflict of impulses, and the concept of the existence of unconscious impulses which show themselves in a variety of ways. Each of these three general theses requires methodologically and scientifically adequate exploration. Freudism could not explore any one of them in this way, therefore did not turn any of them into a tool of scientific analysis. In this perhaps can be found the reason for the scientific sterility of the whole unwieldy theoretical structure which Freudism has so painstakingly erected in the course of more than half a century.

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(*Continued from page two of cover*)

'The reading of Pasternak is often a concentrated and difficult labour, calling for creative effort on the part of the reader and still ending in questioning guesses and unresolved doubts. And yet, however difficult may be the path to the heart of Pasternak's prose and verse, and though at times the reader is overcome by dull incomprehension, the conquest of difficulties sooner or later turns out to be highly profitable, for though Pasternak is miserly in elucidation, he is astonishingly rich in images, thoughts, emotions, and sensations which give knowledge of the world.'

(Yakov Elsberg, *Na Literaturnom Postu*, April 1930.)

'Pasternak does not, of course, understand and analyse the essence of revolution and civil war. He deals with them as purely spontaneous events, basically accidental, produced by some unfathomable historical and natural forces .... The years of the civil war are interpreted by the poet as years of destruction, nothing else. The revolutionary events were for him merely the ruin of the past, he has not noticed the elements of the new world (which is for him obviously unacceptable). From a formal, literary point of view, and within the framework of his own defective artistic method, this work by Pasternak is on a fairly high level. However, our criterion for appraising the work of this fellow-travelling writer is not the degree of artistic mastery *per se*, but above all the degree to which he has approached the world outlook of the proletariat as the basis of the creative development of the writer in the epoch of victorious socialism.'

(A. Prozorov, 'The tragedy of a subjective idealist,' *Na Literaturnom Postu*, 1932, No. 7.)

'Comrade Pasternak has been talking about a turning point in his views, about his reform. We can say with all sincerity that we have listened with great hope and deep sympathy to these pronouncements. But his works, including those written in the Soviet period, testify to the contrary. Despite his repeated recognition of the revolution and the ennoblement of his lyrical poetry when he sings about it, there is nevertheless in his poems a grating note; the men who made this great revolution are, according to him, smaller than their achievements, they are still primitive .... Comrade Pasternak, you have not heard the voice of the masses, of the workers, of the kolkhozniks; of those masses who are now mature and understand not only how to win on the battlefront, not only how to build factories and to run large collective farms, but who also understand art and who will dictate their laws to art .... The people, the Party as the representative of the people, and Comrade Stalin as the leader of the peoples, take great care of art. One must not say even one word of reproach to the people.'

(V. Kirpomin, *Oktyabr*, June 1936, pp. 210-11.)

'Dr. Zhivago, in your opinion, is the acme of the spirit of the Russian intelligentsia. In our opinion, he is its trough .... As people whose standpoint is diametrically opposed to yours, we naturally believe that it is out of the question to publish your novel in the columns of the magazine *Novy Mir*.'

(Letter to Pasternak from editorial board of *Novy Mir* in 1956, *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 25 October, 1958.)

'Now, as we have learned, Pasternak has been awarded a Nobel Prize. It is quite obvious that this award has nothing at all in common with an impartial assessment of the literary merits of Pasternak's work itself, but is connected with the anti-Soviet clamour which has been raised around Dr. Zhivago, and is purely a political act hostile to our country and aimed at intensifying the cold war.

These are the reasons why we now believe it to be necessary to make public this letter to Boris Pasternak from the former editorial board of *Novy Mir*. It explains convincingly enough why Pasternak's novel could have no place in a Soviet magazine, although naturally it does not express to the full the disgust and contempt which we, like all Soviet writers, feel over Pasternak's present shameful and unpatriotic attitude.'

(A. T. Tvardovsky, A. G. Dementyev, B. G. Zaks, B. A. Lavrenev, V. V. Ovechkin, K. A. Fedin (the editorial board), *Novy Mir*, 1958, No. 11.)

'.... Never even in his heyday was Pasternak regarded as a top-rank writer .... Pasternak's novel is a political lampoon, and lampoons are not *belles-lettres*. One can take a tar-brush and thickly tar the fence, but that is not art. Tar is not paint and a tar-brush is not a painter's brush. Pasternak's novel is low-grade reactionary hack-work moulded into the form of a literary composition .... Pasternak has always made great play with his lyric "refinement," but

(*Continued on page three of cover*)

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(*Continued from page 88*)

now he has displayed primitive vulgarity . . . . He seems to have succumbed to that putrid infection which for a very short time swept over some stagnant corners of Soviet literature and enlivened the hopes of the Philistines embedded in its chinks . . . . By all his activity Pasternak confirms that in our socialist country, gripped by enthusiasm for the building of radiant communist society, he is a weed.'

(David Zaslavsky, *Pravda*, 26 October, 1958.)

'B. Pasternak, who began with a declaration on "pure art," has ended as a weapon of bourgeois propaganda . . . . Therefore, taking into consideration the moral and political fall of B. Pasternak, his betrayal of the Soviet people, of the cause of socialism, peace, and progress, rewarded by the Nobel Prize in the interest of inflaming the cold war, the Presidium of the Soviet Writers' Union, the executive bureau of the organisational committee of the RSFSR Writers' Union, and the Presidium of the Moscow section of the RSFSR Writers' Union, deprive B. Pasternak of the title of Soviet writer and exclude him from the Soviet Writers' Union.'

(*Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 28 October, 1958.)

'Even in a good flock there may be one mangy sheep. We have such a mangy sheep in our socialist society in the person of Pasternak, who has written his slanderous so-called novel. He has gladdened our enemies so much that they have bestowed on him, disregarding of course the artistic merits of his trashy book, a Nobel Prize . . . . Now this man has decided to spit in the face of our people. What is one to say of this? Sometimes we say of a pig, and incidentally quite without justification, that it is a so and so. I must tell you that this is unfair to the pig. A pig never defiles the place where it eats and where it sleeps. Therefore, if one is to compare Pasternak with a pig, it will be obvious that the pig would not have done what he has done.'

(Vladimir Semichastny, secretary of the Komsomol, in a speech to the Communist Youth Congress, *Moscow Radio*, 30 October, 1958.)

'The Washington Government could not continue its manoeuvres indefinitely; public opinion forced it to conclude a cultural agreement with the USSR. Soviet socialist art was advancing victoriously everywhere. It became necessary to invent something, even at the price of deceiving the public, to divert its attention from progressive art. This is how the "Pasternak case" was born, not as a triumph of world literary reaction, but rather as an escape in emergency.'

(Anton Markus, 'Whom did Boris Pasternak serve?', *Pravda* (Czechoslovakia), 12 November, 1958.)

'Pasternak's course from decadence and individualism to moral and political disgrace is quite natural, and the lamentations of his ideological brethren understandable. With *Dr. Zhivago*, decadent literature has been enriched with one more "masterpiece"; it is one more work of a traitor and a misanthrope. And Pasternak has called upon himself the contempt and curse of his nation. The Soviet people have given him his due and rightly evaluated his behaviour.'

(Editorial, *Literaturen Front* (Bulgaria), 13 November, 1958.)

'Anyone who has followed recent comments in Soviet literary circles will know that Pasternak is not worthy of the title of a Soviet writer and is a traitor to Russian literature, an enemy of the people, peace, and socialism.'

(*Peking Radio*, 18 November, 1958.)

'I am not anxious to denigrate Pasternak, his sense of beauty, his sensitivity to mood, his power to express both. I am sure his book is written in sincerity, with no desire to harm, just as, according to report, its manuscript was handed in good faith to a reputable Western publisher before there was any question of its non-publication in the USSR. A recent report runs that a Soviet Writers' Union official, explaining its non-publication in the USSR, said: "It is against our Soviet morality." Many people may feel, though they find this saying and appraisal of the novel just, that these provide no adequate reasons for its Soviet non-publication. That society is stronger which can afford to allow ideas to be settled by discussion, not suppression. The exercise of censorship for necessary security can degenerate into an unnecessary tyranny of cliques.'

(Ivor Montagu, *World News*, 4 October, 1958.)

'The conception that the writer is a sacred being entitled to absolute single "self-expression" and exempt from considerations of the natural consequences to be apprehended from his acts is a long-lived and long-exploded piece of nonsense.'

(Ivor Montagu, 'Much ado about . . . . Zhivago,' *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 1, No. 4, December 1958, p. 100.)

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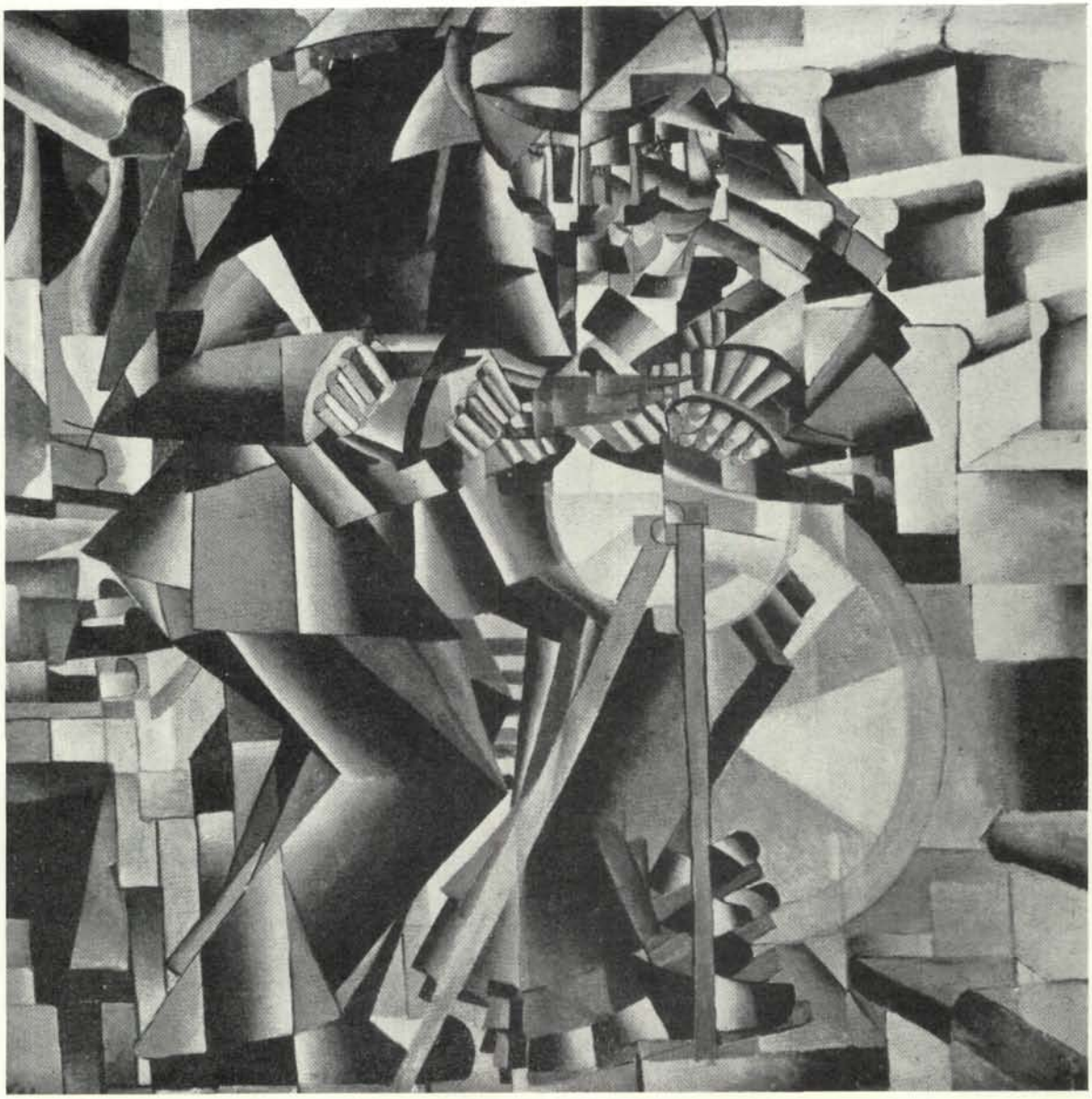

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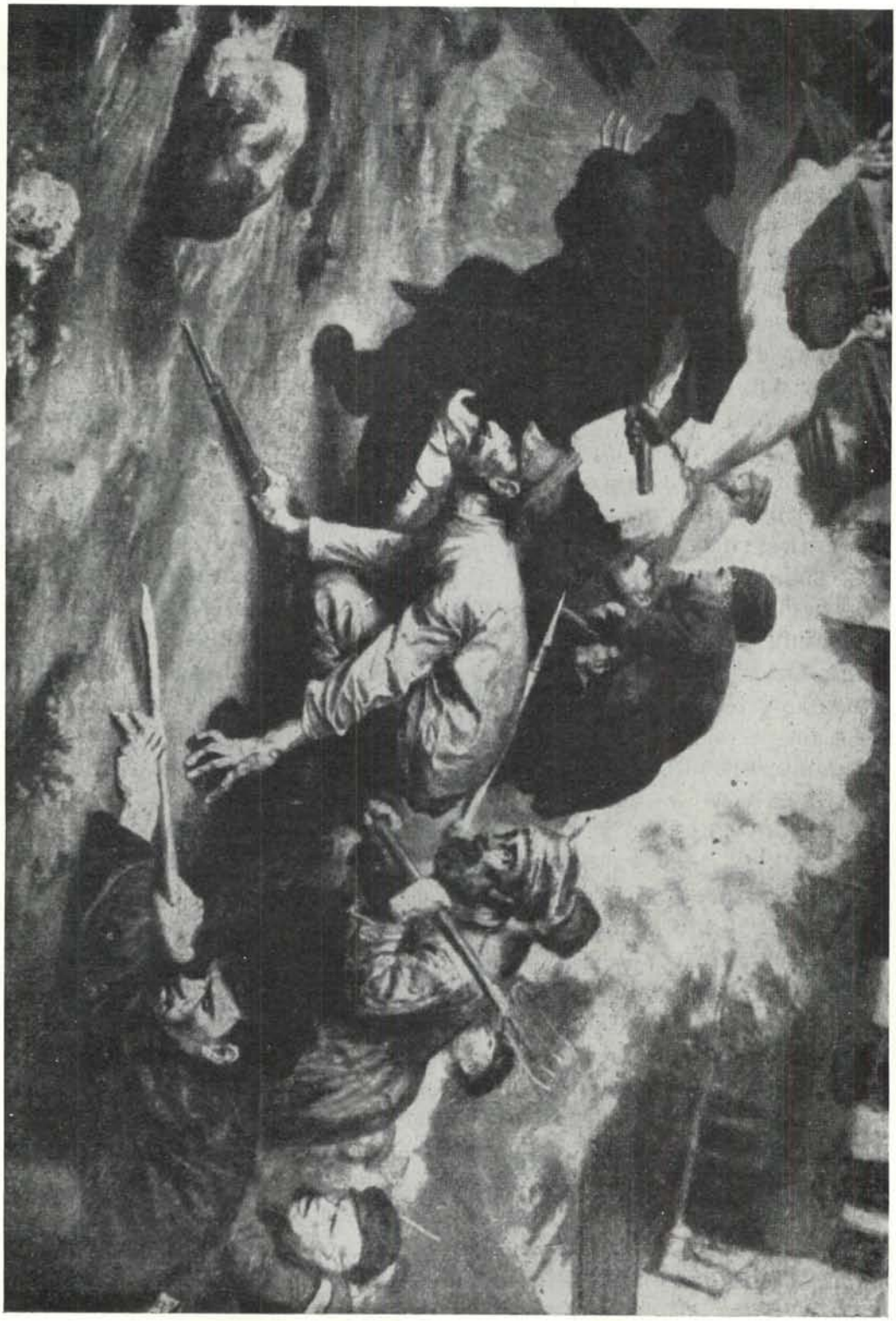

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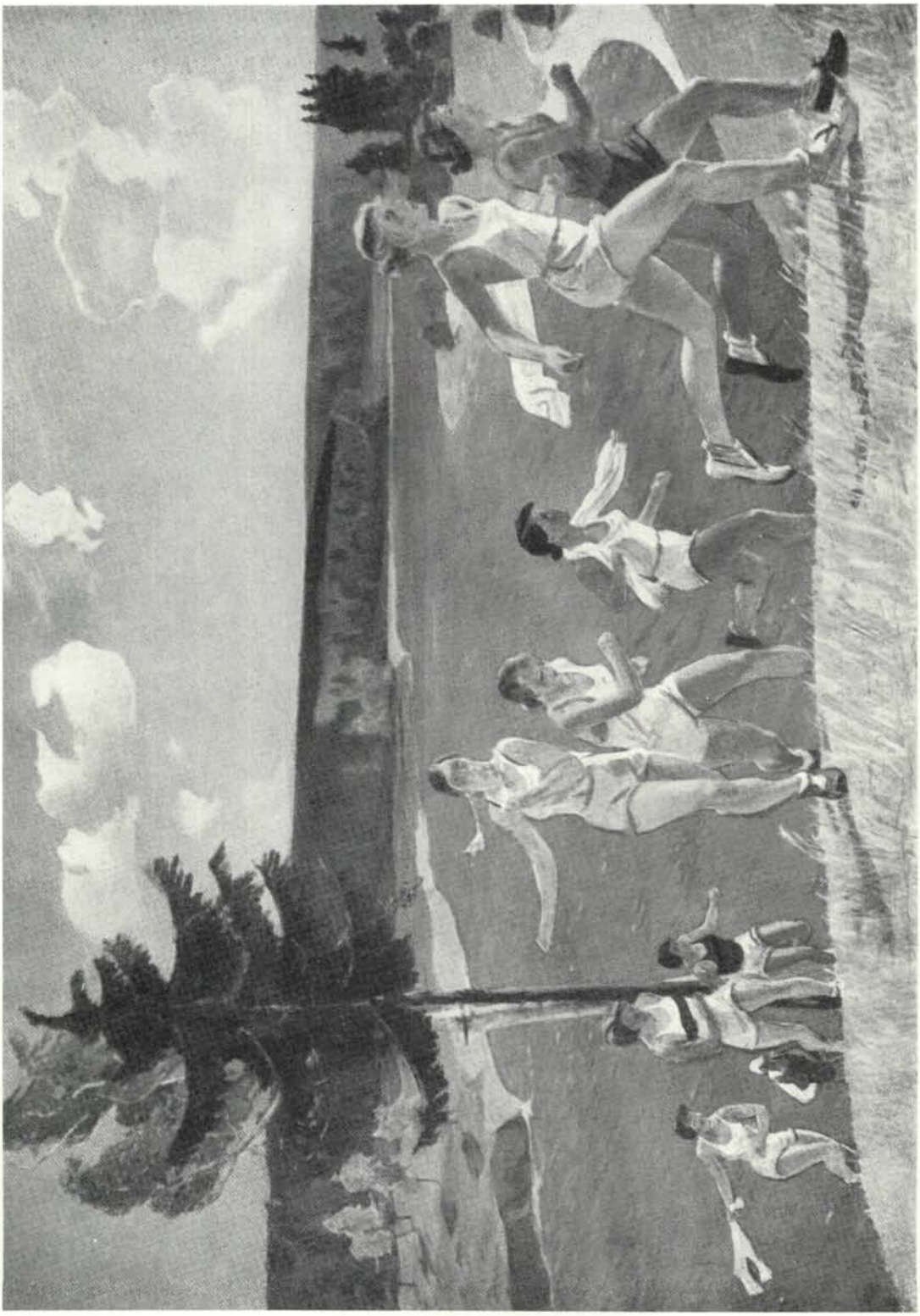

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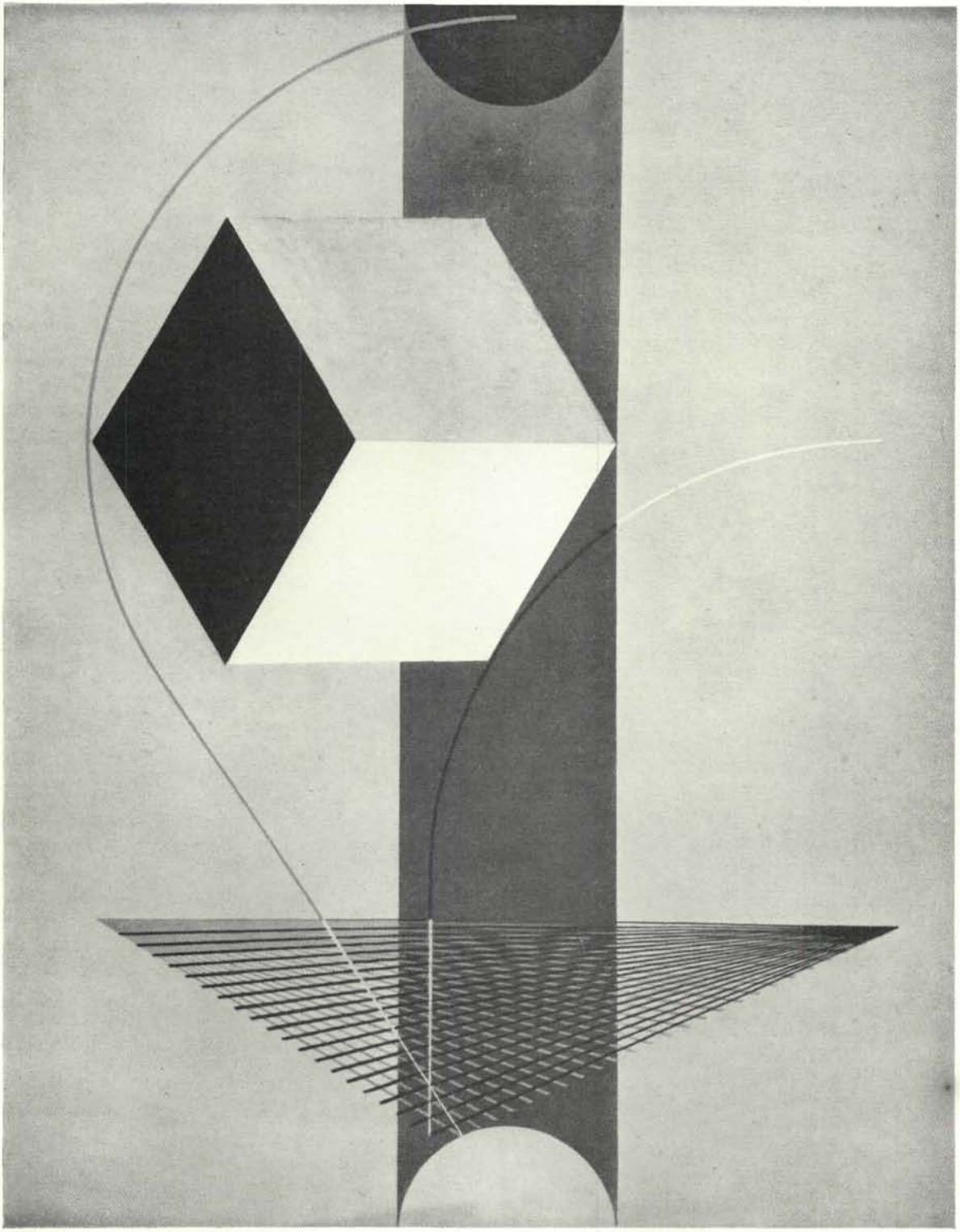

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